THE

Curse of Ulrica;

OR THE

WHITE CROSS KNIGHTS

OF

RIDDARHOLMEN.

SWEDISH ROMANCE

OF THE

SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

Chi va lontan dalla sua patria, vede
Cose, da quel, che già credea, lontane:
Che narrandole poi, non se gli crede,
E stimato bugiardo ne rimane;
Che'l volgo sciocco non gli vuol darfede,
Se non le vede, e tocca chiare, e piane.
Perquesto io so, che l'inesperienza
Farà al mio canto dar poca credenza.

Ariosto, Orl. Fur.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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PREFACE.

THE following tale is intended as an illustration of a popular superstition, prevalent in many countries; but which holds a very remarkable influence over the minds of the inhabitants of the North of Europe. It commences at a period sufficiently remote to render it likely that men, even of the highest rank and attainments, would not be exempt from its

influence

influence;* but even at a much later and more enlightened era, the mind was not completely emancipated from what may be deemed the childhood of philosophy. Our own Dryden affords a re-

* The author has inspected the curious MS. written by Eric the XIVth of Sweden, and deposited in the library of the University of Upsala. It might be deemed a prospective journal of the King's life; the events of each day are predicted from the appearances which the heavenly bodies would exhibit, &c. The calculations seem elaborate—but the figures and symbols are studiously obscure, and the mystic accompaniments were no doubt intended to veil it from profane eyes. It is a curious relic of the imbecility of a regal mind; of one who [illegible]red to the hand of our glorious and talented Queen Elizabeth.

a remarkable instance of the influence which astrology held over a great mind; and surely the errors of the credulous may be pardoned, when we reflect that we owe to their fondness for the favourite baubles of the age—the Philosopher's Stone and Astrology,—some of the most extraordinary discoveries which distinguish the natural philosophy of the present day.

A residence of some time in the North of Europe, enabled the author to describe the character of its scenery; and if the descriptions of such local peculiarities occur

occur too frequently in the following work, he confesses his inability to resist transcribing them from his port-folio: but he offers them, he presumes, with some claim to the indulgence of the reader, as sketches from nature only.

He may be charged with having given too gloomy a portrait of the religion of the sixteenth century, but in the historians of that age there may be found many more terrible examples of the effect of bigotry and intolerance in hardening the human heart; and the comparatively recent instances which might be adduced from a sister

kingdom,

kingdom, shew that wherever the gloomy spirit of fanaticism sways the minds of opposite factions, the cruelties and most dreadful excesses of a barbarous age are renewed, and the tragedy is acted by different characters, but with the same result. When men are resolved to do a great injustice, they do not borrow aid from arguments, which would not stand the test of their reasons and understandings; they appeal to some undefined right of conscience for their support,—and when all human arguments are untenable, and their actions would become the mockery

mockery of their understandings, they are satisfied to commit the greatest enormities, in...God's name!

To amuse the reader and gratify his love for the marvellous, was not altogether the intention of the author; his modesty does not prevent him declaring, that his object is to instruct as well as to amuse. For, in making the following work the vehicle of his sentiments on many subjects, he would feel the deepest shame if he had not had a moral in view; and he would experience the acutest remorse, if it was disfigured with one line which could

could injure the cause of morality and virtue, or deepen the hue which mantles the cheek of innocence and beauty. The author deprecates the supplicating posture of many of his brethren, when according to the established ceremony of literary politeness, he makes his debut in a preliminary address. Conscious of the incapability of the following trifle to stand the test, he would yet rather provoke criticism than escape it; for he sincerely desires to be instructed in those points in which he may have failed. In conclusion, and while he recommends this

this tale to the indulgence of the reader and candour of his critics, he begs leave to observe, that in the execution of many compositions of a more serious character than any which the present can lay claim to, he has felt the truth of the following observation of Diderot, "Il est facile de critiquer "juste, et difficile d'exécuter mé- "diocrement."—*De la Poësie dramatique.*

London, Feb. 1815.

THE

CURSE OF ULRICA,

&c. &c. &c.

CHAP. I.

He ask'd the waves, and ask'd the felon winds,
What hard mishap hath doom'd this gentle swain,
And question'd every gust of rugged wings,
That blows from off each beak'd promontory.
They knew not of his story!

MILTON'S LYCIDAS.

In the latter end of the autumn of 1573, the body of a young man, bruised and bleeding, was discovered lying on the verge of a precipice which overhung the little lake Unden in the northern part of Sweden; by a young peasant of the name of Carl Olofson. The moon had just risen, and her light, gleaming through the scathed

firs, which here and there had struck their roots through the deep fissures of the rocks, guided the benevolent peasant to the spot where it lay. Carl felt the body, it was yet warm: he examined the wounds, they were not deep;—the stranger appeared to be more stunned than hurt. "Poor "soul," exclaimed Carl, "how pale "it looks!—His heart still beats, his "life may yet be saved!—It was well I "came hither before the wolves had "made their meal of thee!"

Carl now tried to lift up the body, but his strength was unequal to the burthen; he tore off his handkerchief, and binding it round the head of the stranger, which seemed to have chiefly suffered, he ran to his father's cottage, which was only a short distance from the spot, to obtain assistance. Old Arnd Olof, his father, hastily tied together some boards to form a litter,

and

and accompanied Carl to the place where he had found the body. They raised it gently on the litter, and the stranger giving some signs of returning animation, they hastened with their burthen to the cottage. Axel desired his son to hasten his mother, who was preparing some cordials for the wounded man; while he heaped on their little bed, in which he had placed the stranger, all the spare bed cloaths the cottage afforded, and washed the blood carefully from his wounds.

"May the cross of Christ protect "us!" exclaimed the old woman, when she beheld the ghastly figure stretched on the bed. "Here has "been bloody work, and so near our "cottage! He seems of some rank "also—observe how that brilliant "sparkles in the light of the lamp."

"Peace!" cried Axel, "prithee try

" to pour down his throat some of " your best cordial."

The old Ulrica now approached the stranger, and while Carl held the lamp, she succeeded in making him swallow some of her restorative. He now opened his eyes, and, after a feeble expression of thankfulness, endeavoured to make them understand his wish for repose.

" The like of him," said Ulrica, " don't travel a foot; who can he be?"

" I will look into my book," replied Axel.

In Sweden the peasants, at certain distances, are obliged to procure from the neighbourhood post-horses for the accommodation of travellers and to forward the royal post. Axel Olof was a postmaster; and having brought out his book, in which he had entered the names of all those who had sent forward a courier to bespeak post-horses, he found

found an order for three post-horses to be ready at ten o'clock on that night, to proceed towards Stockholm, signed the Count Adolphus de Beaumarchais. The hour was passed and the Count had not arrived, as they expected, and they all agreed that the Count de Beaumarchais was their guest. Their suspicion was perfectly right. It was the Count de Beaumarchais, whom their son had rescued from the grave.

Shortly after the sun had risen, they crowded round the bed of the Count. They found he had obtained no rest; his cheeks were flushed, his hands burned, and his eyes wandered wildly.

"I will go," said Axel, "to Biom-
"berg, for Father Laurentius. I fear
"the Count is likely to be very ill;
"do you, Christina," added he to his daughter, "attend on the Count,
"while your mother is busied putting
"things to rights."

Christina drew over a stool and her spinning-wheel, and sat down to her work by the Count's bedside.

Christina was young and even interesting for the daughter of poor peasants; but her large expressive blue eyes were often bent on the ground, and the lassitude of her cheerless deportment was but ill calculated to display the graces of her dignified form. She had received, for a person in her situation of life, a good education; but the wild and romantic scenery, by which she had been surrounded from her infancy, and the powerful effect of some singular events, which were mingled with her earliest impressions, gave to her mind a peculiar colouring of enthusiasm and romance; while a soft and tender melancholy which often tinged it, rendered her still more interesting. She yielded an implicit faith to all the popular superstitions,

superstitions, which held so remarkable an influence over the mind in the credulous age in which she lived. Her fancy was easily fired by the marvellous. Unforeseen events, a tale of spirits, visions of the shadowy world, had for her mind no common charms. She would often sit for hours on the rocky shore, with her eyes fixed on the surface of the blue lake, tracing the shadows of surrounding objects, as they changed in fantastic forms on the tremulous mirror, or watching the existence of a curling wave as it dimpled, swelled, and rolled along, until it broke against the mossy rock on which she sat. The bounding of the majestic elk, the plaintive cry of the wild water fowl, as they flew along the surface of the lake, seeking their haunts, would often awake her from these reveries and hurry her to the cottage, 'ere the dews of evening de-

scended on her head, She felt interested for the Count, from the mystery which seemed to envelope him; she listened, while he raved in a broken slumber, and bent with excited curiosity over the unhappy stranger.

" Edda! Montbazon! they sink,
" they perish!..... there he sits,
" dressed in his bloody shroud! he
" beckons to me, there is room in his
" narrow grave!.. Father, I come—
" quick, help! help!.. they tore out
" my heart at midnight. Your friend!
" —a dagger! Hark, music! it is the
" song of the dead, who have burst
" their coffins asunder? — Room,
" room there! for the spirits who de-
" scend on the breeze of midnight!"

" Holy mother of God!" ejaculated Christina, " how he raves!"— She offered him drink; his lips were parched, he tasted but a little. " I
" burn, I burn," he exclaimed, and immediately

immediately dropped into a deep sleep.

In the course of the morning Axel arrived with Father Laurentius, whom he was so fortunate as to find at home. On looking at the Count, he shook his head. He felt his pulse: "the gen- "tleman," said the Monk, "is highly "feverish!" He examined his wounds, and pronounced them not dangerous. —"He is young, I shall order him "something to procure repose; na- "ture and his own constitution must "do the rest."

Father Laurentius was one of those benevolent beings, who exercised his medical skill rather for the benefits it enabled him to confer on his species, than for the emolument it brought to him—he was faithful to his vow of poverty. In early life he had suffered great disappointments, yet his temper was not ruffled. His heart, which

severe anguish might have soured, only melted with a more open expansion to the tale of woe—He had been unfortunate himself; this had only taught him to feel more exquisitely keen the distresses of others—That which would have made another a misanthrope, only expanded the finer feelings of his soul; it taught him to look up to the most perfect of all models—he went about doing good.

In the course of a few days, the skill of Father Laurentius had succeeded in allaying the violence of the fever. The Count was now able to sit up; his first inquiry was after Bertrand, his servant; "had he arrived?" He was answered in the negative, "alas! then "he has perished!" exclaimed the Count.

There was a matchless grace and symmetry that adorned the fine though faded form of the Count,

which

which irresistibly attracted the sympathy of the too sensitive Christina; and yet, while she eagerly gazed on him, it was not love which fascinated her: and when the splendour of his full dark eye would beam on hers, it was not love which taught her timidity to withdraw them, cast them on the ground, and thus conceal the tears which dimmed them. It was a more exquisitely refined sensation she experienced; admiration, respect, and even fear, constituted this mixed feeling. She saw before her a form which embodied all the various images her mind had been in the habit of pourtraying; she now saw realized the idea of all her romantic visions; at least, so fancied the visionary maid, and while she shaped new wonders, she would marvel and gaze, with an untired eye, for hours, spell-bound on her seat, with a look as fixed and mo-

tionless as the Venus of Pygmalion, ere the Gods had listened to his prayers, and before the statue had started into life and motion.

Father Laurentius was particularly anxious to keep the Count from any mental exertion: he perceived that conversation fatigued him, and excited the irritability of his mind, and his present weakness was induced, and protracted, by a thick melancholy, which clouded and undermined his mental powers. Adolphus mentioned to the benevolent Monk his inability to give any adequate remuneration for his professional attendance; but Laurentius in the most decisive manner refused to accept of any tokens of the Count's gratitude, and Adolphus saw that he could not press him farther on the subject without giving him offence.

It was on account of this tender care of Adolphus's mental health, that

Laurentius

Laurentius would not as yet allow him to relate those events which had brought him to that perilous situation, in which he would have perished but for the assistance of the cottagers. It was in vain that Christina threw her inquiring eyes on Adolphus, anxious to hear his tale of woes; Laurentius had peremptorily forbidden any question to be put to him on that subject; "but," he added, "that as soon as he saw "the Count sufficiently recovered, he "would himself demand from him the "long expected recital."

The effects of this treatment soon became visible. Adolphus rapidly altered for the better; his mind now recovered its tone, he was able to converse with the good family of the cottage, and their cheerfulness helped to dispel the bad spirits which retarded his convalescence. A good constitu-

tion,

tion, and the attention of these good peasants, had completed the Count's cure in a few weeks. He still felt himself too weak to travel, and determined not to pursue his journey until his health was completely re-established. On the Monk's arrival that morning he pronounced him completely recovered.

It was arranged that Laurentius should return in the evening to the cottage, in order to hear the Count's long wished for narrative; for Axel had never demanded of the Count any explanation of the calamity which had occurred to him, and the anxious curiosity of Ulrica and Christina had given way to the stronger interest they had taken in his recovery.

The Count was now sufficiently strong to be moved in a chair to the outside of the cottage. It was on a

fine

fine autumnal evening, they ventured to allow their invalid to inhale the mellowed air.

The cottage was situated on the shore of the lake, which, indented with little promontories, and studded with woody islands, reflected their tints on its surface. As far as the eye could reach, forests of fir and pine filled up the outline of the landscape; a few green patches, surrounding the cottage, shewed marks of cultivation. Above it rose a rocky cliff, where immense pines, of the greatest diversity of shapes, had rooted themselves; some rose straight to Heaven, while others, forsaking their scanty hold, hung with their roots uppermost over caves and rocks; while torrents of water rushed through them, and, curling in white lines through the dark foliage of the fir, lost themselves in distance, where they mingled with the

waters

waters of the lake. The cottage was formed of the rough trunks of trees, laid horizontally, and dove-tailed into each other; where the corners met the crevices were carefully filled up with moss. The roof was covered with thin green sod, on which grew abundance of wild roses, strawberries, and sweet forget-me-not.

The soul of Adolphus was moved at this scene; it formed so striking a contrast to the troubles he had endured. Then the sensations arising from returning health are so exquisitely sweet, the balmy air, the perfume of flowers, the blue void of Heaven, strikes us with a more awful harmony when the chords of the soul are in unison to receive their impressions. A thousand nameless pleasures of existence, which in health we possess but do not enjoy, awake in the invalid all the organs of returning life and vigour. The last

rays

rays of the departing sun were faintly glimmering on the lake; the air was still; there was no sound save the ripples of the lake, which gently broke on the shore, or the buzzing of the gnats and other insects, which danced on its surface.

The old peasant came now forth from the cottage, and congratulated Adolphus on his recovery.

ADOLP.—My good friend, how shall I repay you for your kindness? but for you I should be numbered with the dead!

AXEL.—My own feelings, Count, repay me already, for having performed my duty.

ADOLP.—You possess a good heart, my friend, such sentiments are not common now-a-days *(with a sigh)*.

AXEL.—I trust, Count, they will be always found to exist in Sweden.

ADOLP.—I hope, my friend, you will not be offended,—but that cross

you

you wear suspended from your bosom excites my curiosity.

AXEL.—This cross *(looking at it with emotion,)* was the gift of the great Gustavus to my father; he did the king a signal service; he headed a band of those brave mountaineers in Dalecarlia, who assisted the king against the Danes, and finally placed him on the throne of Sweden. When the king had vanquished all his enemies, and wore his crown in security, he offered him, as a recompence, money and lands.—My father refused them; the king then hung this cross around his neck, and he left it to his children —that they might emulate his good deeds.

ADOLP.—An action worthy of a noble soul!—My friend, I feel that I shall be soon able to pursue my journey, thanks to your care. Having lost

my

my baggage and with it all my resources, I fear I shall not be able to reward you as I could wish—as you deserve—but take this ring, *(taking a brilliant off his finger and presenting it to Axel)*; take it to the neighbouring town and dispose of it, you will find it, perhaps, of sufficient value to repay you for some of the expenses you have been obliged to undergo on my account.

AXEL.—*(With indignant warmth)*. Count! you forget that I also am a Dalecarlian?

ADOLP.—Worthy old man! I meant not to offend you!

Laurentius now arrived and congratulated Adolphus on the improvement in his looks. The old Ulrica came forth from the cottage, bearing in her hands a bowl of milk with some wild strawberries, which she declared were quite fresh from the woods; to this she

she added some dried fish and flat cakes of rye bread, coarse but sweet; these she arranged on a table, white as snow, before the cottage door. After they had all partaken of the rural supper Adolphus commenced the following relation, and continued it, at intervals, each evening, as his strength permitted.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

THE NARRATIVE OF ADOLPHUS.

Fato profugus.——VIRGIL.

Driven by fate . . .

I am descended from one of the most ancient and illustrious families of the kingdom of France. My father, Jean-Louis de Beaumarchais, was one of the most accomplished noblemen who graced the court of Francis I. The prodigies of valour which he displayed at the unfortunate battle of Pavia, gained him the admiration of the French nobility and the favour of his sovereign. When Francis was releas-

ed

ed from his imprisonment, in consequence of the Treaty of Madrid, he honourably performed those promises which he had made on the field of battle; and my father, after having spent the flower of his youth in his service, retired at length from court, laden with honours, and distinguished by the approbation and gratitude of his sovereign. He withdrew from the cares and troubles of a public life to the château of St. Blois, the seat of his ancestors, which was situated amid the green and fertile vallies of Lorraine. His noble heart did not meet with a recompense for its toils in the heaven of domestic felicity. His return from the perils of the war was not greeted with smiles, nor blessed with the kiss of love.

The Countess Marcellina was a daughter of the ancient family of the Counts D'Auvergne; her disposition

was

was gloomy and bigotted, and she was fervently attached to the religion of the church of Rome, which was then first assailed by the popular doctrines which Luther and the Calvinists were spreading throughout Germany. This new religion had found converts even in the heart of France. My father had mixed with the Calvinists in the Low Countries and in Germany; and after submitting their new doctrine to the tests of his reason and understanding, which was naturally very acute, he adopted the principles of this sect, and openly professed himself a Calvinist.

The old Count D'Auvergne was so exasperated at hearing of this open profession of a faith he abhorred, that, on my father's absence at court, during the coronation of Henry II, (who about this time succeeded his father Francis I,) he prevailed on the Countess

tess to separate from her husband, and to seek the protection of her paternal mansion. This advice of my grandfather was warmly supported by the arguments of an Italian Monk named Rezzonico, who was Father Confessor to the Countess, and constantly resided in the castle.

I was too young, at that time, to feel a mother's loss; but I have a lively recollection of the constant differences of my parents, on my account; and I confess that my tears were soon dried, when I found myself freed from the sour looks, and rigid discipline, of the Monk Rezzonico. My father was more shocked than surprised on his return. He caressed me with great fondness, and told me with tears in his eyes, that I was the only comfort he had remaining; for my sister, who was then an infant, had been carried off by my mother, and neither my father's

ther's intreaties, nor his threats of appealing to the civil power, could induce my mother to give up the infant.

My father at length desisted from the attempt, for it would have been fruitless for him to have appealed to the tribunals of his country; there was then no law for a Calvinist in France, and disgrace, fine, imprisonment, and even death, might have been the result of an attempt to force his rights from the powerful family of D'Auvergne. He resided now principally at St. Blois. In this retreat he gathered round him a circle of his friends, among whom were some of the most enlightened philosophers and celebrated scholars of the age. It was in such society, that the early powers of my mind developed themselves. My father watched the dawning light, which breaks upon the ignorance of

childhood, and he spared no cares, no anxieties, to give a proper direction to that restless spirit of curiosity, which is so remarkably in early youth.

I was confirmed in the principles of the reformed religion, from the example of the society in which I lived; and was, perhaps, not a little swayed by pride, in endeavouring to emulate the conduct of my father, who was reckoned one of the heroes of that desperate cause. The tenderness of this parent supplied me with masters in every capacity; at an early age, I was instructed in some of the ancient, and in most modern languages, and excelled in all the accomplishments of a youth of rank. But these peaceful occupations I was about to leave too soon, and perhaps for ever.

The calm which lulled us in security during these happy days, was

but

but the brooding stillness of a storm, which was soon about to blacken the land with horrors, and drench the fields of France with native blood. Various rumours had reached us of the persecution which several Calvinists had suffered. But on the death of Henry, the feeble Francis resigned himself to the government of the Queen mother and her ministers; who were warmly attached to the interests of the church of Rome. The standard of intolerance was erected in the land; and my mind yet bleeds at the recollection of those horrible torments, which I have heard described by the unfortunate protestants, who passed through the ordeal of a court then erected, which on account of its severity, was justly denominated the court of the *burning chambers*.

My father, whose disposition was naturally very lively, now became gloomy

and abstracted; he had frequent secret conferences with his friends, to which I was not admitted. He deemed me too young perhaps, to be trusted with secrets of importance: but my soul burned with the desire of signalising myself in some way, which might prove to him that I was no longer a child. I was exercising a favourite war-horse (which he had presented to me) on a fine evening in autumn; after training him for some hours, and accustoming him to the report and fire of my carbine, the sky suddenly became overcast, dark clouds swept across the horizon, and I returned towards the castle drenched with the rain, which now fell in heavy showers. I wished to prove myself worthy of bearing a soldier's hardships, and I proceeded slowly through the wood. until the storm had spent its fury. On arriving near the portal, I turned round

round towards the declining sun, and my attention was suddenly attracted by the remarkable colour of its disk, which was of a deep and sanguine red; I marvelled at this, for it yet rode high in the heavens, and wanted some hours of setting.

While my heart shrunk at this omen of bloodshed, my horse started at a figure which stood under the branches of a large plane tree. It was a man, with his cloak folded round him; the big rain-drops which had gathered on the leaves, fell thickly around him, yet he stirred not and appeared anxious to avoid my gaze. I rode briskly up to him, and demanded who he was; he muttered something between his teeth, which I could not hear. "Come forth," said I, "from your hiding-place, none but "assassins or spies seek concealment," "and avoid the light; come forth,

" or the arm of Adolphus shall chas-
" tise thee!"

" Ha! brave Adolphus," he exclaimed moving towards me, " I do " not conceal myself from you; look at " me; do you not know me?" he lifted up the leaf of his hat, which was drawn over his eyes, and I recognised a face which was familiar to me. I had seen him many years before among my father's [illegible] but I could not recal his name to my mind. " You hesi-
" tate," said he, " I am Gaspard Mont-
" bazon and your father's friend—
" hasten, brave youth, and whisper to
" him, that I shall go round to the
" garden wicket, where I shall wait
" until he admits me himself—be se-
" cret and cautious, for if my name
" should escape your lips, you will
" betray me unto death."

" You shall find," replied I, drawing myself

myself up with an air, " that I am a " man."

I instantly rode off to the castle. My father was surrounded by his friends, but I managed to lead him to his library, without letting any suspicious mystery of manner betray me to the company, I closed the door carefully, and informed him of my errand. He started up and embraced me, " you " are worthy," he exclaimed, " to be " my son, return to the saloon and entertain my guests, and observe you " keep strictly the secret which Mont- " bazon entrusted you with."

I was pleased at the increasing confidence which my father now reposed in me. He drew me aside in the course of the evening, and informed me, that affairs of the utmost importance would render it necessary for him and his friends to leave St. Blois for a few days: and that he trusted

the affairs of the castle, during his absence, entirely to me. I told him that I already suspected what this affair was; for I had observed the armourers had lately been occupied in furbishing up the old cuirasses and helmets, which were arranged in the gallery of the castle. My father mused for some time, and then told me I had guessed right. I endeavoured to persuade him to allow me to take the field with him; but he replied, that I was yet too young, to undergo the hardships they would be exposed to: yet he flattered me, by giving me the task of putting the castle in a state of defence, in case it should be attacked. After explaining to me, that it was the cause of his religion he was about to defend, and to save their lives and fortunes from becoming the sport of the profligate [illegible]isters of the court, he tenderly embraced me, and enjoined me to be faithful

faithful to my King, my Country, and my God. My tears flowed, when the same evening, by the light of the moon, I beheld, wheeling through the portal, the train of my father's vassals mounted and armed; headed by himself and Montbazon, clad in dazzling armour.

The old vassals came within the walls of the castle; we exerted ourselves to line the embrasures with cannon, and in a few hours we were in a very respectable state of defence. After dividing them into watches, I paced the ramparts. I beheld beacons on the distant hills, flashing through the dark air. I demanded of Bertrand, my favourite servant, the meaning of these fires. "They are, my lord," replied Bertrand, "signals of war and "blood; and the whole country is "risen in arms."

Exhausted with the fatigues I had

undergone on that evening, I gave strict injunctions to the midnight watch, to call me from my couch, in case of any alarm approaching the castle. I laid down in my corslet. The most frightful dreams disturbed my sleep; methought I waded through rivers of blood and fields of fire! the slaughtered bodies of our friends lay scattered around me; the steam of human sacrifice ascended to heaven and bedimmned the sun! Hearing above my head the clapping of many wings, I looked up, and beheld myriads of the bird that scents the dead, hovering over the field of battle, and devouring their victims. A black raven of monstrous size pounced down upon me, stuck his talons into my flesh, and with loud cries tore me to pieces. The agony of acute pain broke my slumber; but still methought I dreamed, when I beheld the glittering of steel

above

above my head. I started on my feet, and beheld the figure of a monk standing at the foot of my bed, with his cowl drawn over his face; "Who is "it dares," I exclaimed, drawing my sword, "thus to intrude upon me, and "break my repose?"

"Be calm, my son," replied the monk, "I am Rezzonico—I come to "save you."

I now recollected him, and I eagerly watched his hand, which was busied in concealing something beneath his garment. I was convinced it was the dagger, which a moment before had threatened my life. "To save me, "reverend father?" I replied ironically.

"Yes, my son," he replied, "to "save your life, and your immortal "soul from perdition."

"They are both, good father, in "God's holy keeping."

"There is no heaven," he continu-

ed, "for heretics; but if you do truly "repent of your errors, and forsake "this damnable heresy, I will give "you absolution—and having made "your peace with God, you may "make it with the world; for on these "conditions, I may lead you to your "mother's feet."

I replied to this speech with the contempt it deserved: and bidding him quit my presence, added, that I should issue orders to have him safe conducted beyond the castle walls.

"Apostate!" he exclaimed; "and "darest thou taunt me thus proudly? "but behold! vengeance is near at "hand, and the hand of God will ac- "complish its work."

On this he approached the casement. I followed him closely, with my drawn sword pointed towards him. He drew back the tapestry which hung before the sash, and advanced towards the

the balcony, which ran along the projecting casement. The faint beams of the morning were already dawning; but a pale and flickering flame was visible in the horizon, and was easily distinguishable from the glowing lines, which began to streak the eastern sky.

" Behold!" said Rezzonico, pointing with his finger towards the light, " the wrath of heaven has fallen on " the dwelling of the guilty Saint Al- " bin, who is, forsooth, one of the free- " thinking Calvinists. Tremble for " the fate of De Beaumarchais! for " on the castle of St. Blois the aveng- " ing fire falls next."

I gave a sigh to the fate of St. Albin, and turned immediately to address Rezzonico: but the monk was gone! Amazed at his sudden escape, I searched my apartment, then passed into the anti-room, where my servant Bertrand

lay

lay fast asleep; but I found the outside door double bolted as I left it. I awakened Bertrand, and we spent a considerable time in examining the suite of chambers adjoining the room in which I slept, without discovering any passage through which the monk could have made his escape; and on hailing the sentries on the battlements, they replied, that they had not observed anything, resembling the figure we described, pass by the limits of the watch. My mind quickly shook off the impression which this adventure had made on it, when the news was brought me, that a column of the enemy, headed by one of the most celebrated generals of the Catholic party, was advancing to form the siege of St. Blois. My soul mounted with ardour at this intelligence; I endeavoured to animate the hearts of our vassals, with the same heroism which burned

in

in mine. I pictured to them the fate which awaited them, if the enemy should conquer us. I pointed to the flaming ruins of the castle of St. Albin. They interrupted me with shouts, which shewed their resolution taken to conquer, or die in the breach. To the insulting proposals of the enemy, we answered with the thunder of our artillery.

For many days the contest was continued with doubtful success; but the besiegers at last succeeded in opening a breach, and filling it with assailants. I was prepared to yield my life in defending it, when suddenly the enemy began to fall back; although they outnumbered us by a prodigious difference. The standards of my father and Montbazon appearing in their rear, explained the cause of their retreat. Animated with the presence of our friends, we quickly threw the enemy

my from our walls, and closed up the breach. From the towers of the castle, we looked down with anxiety on the field of battle. The Count and Montbazon performed prodigies of valour; but my father received a wound, which obliged him to quit the field. Desperate at seeing the Count fall, wherever Montbazon moved, death appeared to follow, and blood flowed from his track. I instantly descended from the castle, and made a sortie at the head of a chosen troop; the battle was now no longer doubtful, for just as I rode up, the desperate Montbazon thrust his poniard through the vizor of the enemy's general, with whom he had engaged in close combat; and the moment he fell from his horse, they fled panic-struck from the field.

My father's wound was but slight, and a few days compleated his recovery. He overwhelmed me with caresses

resses on hearing of my conduct, and recommended me, in case of any fatality happening to himself; to the protection of the brave Montbazon; who elated with success, breathed nothing but fire and slaughter against his opponents. My father, on his recovery, consented that I should accompany him to the field; and I had now the opportunity of being a witness of almost all the principal battles of this dreadful civil war. I shall pass over this part of my life in silence.

For ten years I fought under the various generals of the Hugonots, and witnessed the grandest exploits of war. And yet what is the simple impression, which the boasted deeds of an hero have left on my mind? From the pomp and glorious apparel of the sanguinary monster I turn with disgust. They are but the tinsel charms which gloss the foul and loathsome carcase of

the

the many headed vampire, who battens on the spoils of the dead. What is his daily pastime, and the glorious circumstances of his occupation? The shrieks of thousands who writhe under the blade, the groans of the dying, and the last convulsive pang of expiring nature; or what is more horrible still, the wailing cry of the new made widow, who lives and suffers a thousand deaths, sitting on an heap of grizly dead; and the imitative sobs of her unconscious babe, who crawls on the dead body of its sire, and weeps, and yet has still to feel his loss! I have witnessed such things; and in the pursuit of this vain bubble, I have endured labours, which perhaps have abridged the period of my existence. I have suffered from the most excruciating diseases; I have felt the horrors of famine, and the keen agonies of severe bodily pain. And yet what

what boots it to me now? The very recollection of these scenes is painful and mournful to the soul!

Both parties were exhausted by so long a contest, and peace seemed at length to smile on my bleeding country. For two years, the dissimulation of a perfidious court, and the smiles of a deceitful king, lulled the chiefs of the Hugonots in a fatal security. Dispersed and unarmed, they placed their safety alone in the honourable performance of those conditions, which had procured for them the terms of an advantageous peace. But humanity weeps at the crimes which were meditated by this cruel king, and his bigotted advisers. Oh! surely the hand of Providence will be lifted in anger against the posterity of the regal executioner, who presided at the massacre of St. Bartholomew! At this memorable period, my father, who

from

from the receipt of various intelligence had partly penetrated the designs of the court, departed from St. Blois for Paris, in order to warn the brave and virtuous Coligni of their designs, and to confer on the means of avoiding the blow which was meditated against them.

Early on the fatal morning of the 24th August, our gardener's son approached the saloon, bearing in his hand a basket of peaches for my breakfast. After I had eaten some, I perceived a slip of paper rolled round one of them at the bottom of the basket. On it were written these words in pencil. —"That God of justice, who did not "think it meet to let your sister live "to be my consolation, will perhaps "stir up in your heart the spirit of the "true faith; and by extinguishing "the seeds of heresy, which defile it, "save your body and soul from per-

"dition.

" dition. If thou wouldst preserve
" both from his unerring vengeance,
" present thyself this evening, ere the
" bell rings for vespers, at the gate of
" the Franciscan monastery; where
" thou wilt be received by one, who
" will conduct thee to Marcellina."

The receipt of this note put my mind into very great agitation. The unhappy differences which had existed for years between the Count and Countess, had cut me off from all communication with her, and the recollection that I possessed a parent to whom I was bound by such tender ties, had scarcely ever presented itself to my recollection, amid the busy and eventful scenes in which I had passed my youth. It now struck my mind with double force. I had not the most remote intention of making the sacrifice which she required of me; but fortified, as I felt myself, in the pro-

testant

testant faith, both by conviction and argument, an irresistible desire possessed me of visiting the Countess at the appointed time, in order to try the effects of my reasoning on her mind. The result of my success I contemplated with infinite delight; for I felt assured it would prove the means of effecting a reconciliation between my father and mother.

I ordered the gardener's son to be brought before me, in order to question him with respect to the means by which he had become possessed of the billet; the youth, however, had fled, and our search after him was vain. I paced the saloon for many hours, arranging my arguments and classing in my recollection the most formidable weapons of 'controversial theology. After a slight repast, I mounted my steed and departed alone for the monastery of the Franciscans, which lay

at

at a considerable distance from St. Blois.

The day was hot and sultry, not a cloud interrupted the blue expanse of heaven, and the scorching beams of a powerful sun fell with direct influence upon me. I gave way to the indolence of my steed, and viewed at my leisure the smiling landscape which surrounded me. It was near the season of the vintage, and the vines bent beneath their luscious burthen; the perfume of a thousand flowers of various hues, filled the air with sweets. The road was bordered by a profusion of orange and lemon trees, and the wild peach blushed from beneath its leafy bower, whose leaves were not stirred by the slightest zephyr. The atmosphere lay still and heavy on the earth, as though it were surfeited with sweets. An indescribable feeling came over me; an almost painful pleasure

shot

shot through my languid frame. My heart was stirred by the most gladdening emotions, and I revelled in the delightful sensations which the charms of my native country, of then happy France, inspired me with. Alas! what a scene of bloodshed was about to mar the beauties of this blessed picture, which my imagination contemplated with such delight.

After indulging in my reverie for several hours, I was aroused from my musing by the distant tolling of the great bell of the Franciscan monastery, which was situated on a small eminence, and overlooked the wooded vale and forest of Chatigny. I spurred on my steed, for the night began to close in darkness around me, and above the brown mass of woods the gilded spires of the convent glowed like a bale of fire. On approaching the convent I beheld an armed band

issue

issue from its portal; several monks headed the procession, and I easily distinguished the imposing figure of Rezzonico, who appeared to be haranguing them in an impressive manner, and frequently appealed to a crucifix, which he elevated above the heads of the armed multitude. The moment I appeared there arose a universal shout. "*It is he!*" they exclaimed, "*It is* "*he!*" I heard no more; for that moment several of them levelled their pieces at me, and fired. The balls whizzed close by me, but fortunately without taking effect. I instantly fired my pistols at the ruffians, faced about my horse, and galloped at full speed towards the woods. The assassins pursued me, and fired several shots after me, but I luckily escaped any injury, and the fleetness of my horse soon carried me into the depth of the forest. This wood extended for several

leagues to the right, across a wild and delvy country. I resolved to pursue this course, and rode hard for several hours, although, at times, the intricacy of the paths, and the opposing branches, lessened my speed. My horse was spent with fatigue, and I was considering how I should pass the night, when a man on horseback passed me at full gallop, and rode into the depth of the forest. Seeing that he was alone, I resolved to follow him, as my situation was so desperate, that it induced me to run all risks. I shouted after him, but on this he doubled his speed. After keeping him in sight for some time, I lost him suddenly, while he turned down a track in the wood, and the sound of his horse's hoofs ceasing instantly, it seemed as though he had sunk into the earth.

At some distance from this place I approached the borders of the forest.

I ascended

I ascended the side of a hill, whose craggy points were feathered with evergreens and sweet flowering shrubs. I alighted from my steed, and leading him by the bridle, proceeded up this ascent. The foliage of the plants was bathed in dew, and glistened in the beams of the moon, which shone through fleecy clouds with a mild and richly yellow light. Halfway up the side of this picturesque ascent I perceived a wreath of smoke, which seemed to rise from an aperture in the earth, curling among the trees. On examining the spot, I saw it proceeded from a rude chimney, which conducted the smoke from under ground, and below it, on the slope of the rock, there was a rustic door, which led to this subterraneous grotto. Green trailing plants climbed up the shining surface of the rock, and the jessamine was taught to hang its wreaths over the

door-way and across a little window, whose latticed casement was completely concealed by clusters of jonquils and roses of province. I gazed with admiration on this place. It looked like a little temple, raised by spells at this witching hour of the night, and dedicated to the genius who presided over this wilderness of sweets. The hand of cultivated taste was so apparent on the outside of this enchanting spot, that it raised within me the most favourable ideas of the humanity of its inhabitants.

Emboldened by this reflection, I knocked against the door. In a few moments, a female voice, of the most enchanting sweet and silver tone, demanded if it was Gaspard? and 'ere I had time to answer, the door was opened by a young female, whose light and airy figure resembled the fabled symmetry of a wood nymph's form. I

followed

followed her across two small rooms, which were excavated in the solid rock. She shrieked, when the light of a small wood fire gave to her view the countenance of a stranger. I felt so assured, by the mingled expression of majesty, innocence, and benevolence, which beamed on her countenance, that I related to her at once the simple truth, which compelled me to fly from the power of my enemies, and requested the protection of her roof until morning dawned. She replied, that I might remain until the return of Gaspard, whom she expected every minute. I sat down in a corner of the hearth, and gazed upon the maid. Her dress was that of a simple cottager, but so neat, so exquisitely well adjusted! Her eyes were of the deepest blue—she was dazzlingly fair, and had a complexion of roses. Her light glossy auburn hair hung on her neck, and

halfway down her waist, in loose thick and irregular curls.

I could scarcely remove my eyes from so fascinating an object. She perceived that she attracted my attention, and her cheeks burned with a deeper hue, and her bosom heaved and fluttered with the alarm, which I had so lately occasioned her. We heard a loud knock at the door, and she flew to open it. Ah! thought I, it is only to a lover's embrace we fly so swift afoot!

I heard a man's voice exclaiming in the outer apartment, the instant he entered, "I am pursued, I am betrayed, Edda!" She closed the outer door quickly, and endeavoured to stop him ere he entered the room in which I sat, but he rushed by her and stood before me.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, "a stranger!"

I stood

I stood up, and made the same request to this man, which I had to the fair cottager, although not with the same hopes; for he looked sternly on me, and his frowning eye gave no sign of encouragement. He was equipped in the labouring dress of a woodcutter, which was rent in many places, a hatchet was stuck in his broad leathern girdle, and his whole exterior denoted a man, who had sunk to the lowest extremity of desperate poverty.

"Surely," he exclaimed, "in thee "I recognize a friend and fellow suf- "ferer! art thou not Adolphus de "Beaumarchais?"

"The same," I cried, "And thou "art Monbtazon!". He replied.

We embraced one another cordially. He apologized for not having recognized me at first; but this was owing to the changes which three years had made in my figure; during which pe-

riod I had not seen Montbazon. He took off his large rustic hat, and removed a pair of false bushy eyebrows, and I then instantly recognized the brave Montbazon, whose desperate exploits I had so often witnessed with admiration. He turned about to the fair Edda, who had looked with wonder on this scene, and presented me: "Your daughter?" I interrogated. "As dear to me as such," he replied, "an adopted one."

When I related to him the particulars of my escape, he uttered a thousand imprecations against Rezzonico. "I have been pursued in the forest "by one of those assassins, who are "now imbruing their hands in the "blood of our friends; but my horse "was fleeter—he may still hover about "my retreat, and I must be cau-"tious."

On his describing to me the part of the

the forest through which he was pursued, I relieved him from his fears, by stating, that I was the person who pursued him. When he felt convinced of this, he appeared more at his ease, and informed me that he escaped by a subterraneous passage, which opened from the cave, at a considerable distance, into the forest. In this passage he concealed his horse, and while Edda prepared a frugal supper, he led my horse, which was browzing outside their dwelling, to the same place. He tried to encourage us to eat, but his countenance indicated the conflict of agonising feelings.

After a pause of a few moments, he suddenly started from his seat. "Hark!" he exclaimed, "do you not "hear?" We scarcely drew our breath, so anxiously did we listen, but we heard no sound. "It is, it is," he

exclaimed, "oh fatal night!" He cautiously unbarred the door, and we stood on the threshold. "Hark! "there it is again; do you not hear "that frightful bell?" We now distinctly heard at intervals, borne on the wind, the sullen pealings of a mournful bell. "That is the signal," said Montbazon, strongly agitated, "of "death! It is the requiem knell of "the Hugonots, which is at this hour "ringing fearfully from one side of "France to the other! Thousands, "and tens of thousands of our bre-"thren will never behold to-morrow's "sun! This is the fatal event I fore-"saw. I received intelligence on this "subject by most marvellous means. "I communicated my fears to your "father; but, alas! he placed too "much faith in the fair promises of "the court. He wished to advise,

"in

" in Paris, with Coligny. Oh! blind
" and infatuate, to rush into the
" snare!"

On beholding my emotion, he led me within the grotto and sought to console me. I had formed a resolution to depart at day-break for Paris, in order to ascertain my father's fate; but he controled this resolution with such convincing arguments, that I suffered myself to be entirely guided by his opinion. Edda had retired to her little apartment, which was separated by a passage from the body of the cell; and Montbazon now shewed me to a little recess, which contained a bed: but the anxiety of my mind banished sleep from my eyes.

At an early hour he told me to arise, and bringing me a complete woodman's dress, he informed me that my only hope of escaping a dreadful fate, lay in my disguising myself, as he had

done. I instantly equipped myself in this dress, and joined them at breakfast.

When our repast was finished, Montbazon prepared to go forth in quest of intelligence, in spite of Edda's tears and my intreaties. "I pass for a good "catholic in these parts," said he, "and in this disguise I fear no dis-"covery."

I passed the day in conversing with Edda, and assisting her to tend the flowers which grew on the outside of the grotto. Her conversation was irresistibly fascinating. She possessed a comprehensive mind, and the enthusiasm with which she spoke, threw an indescribable charm over every subject on which she treated. I must freely confess the powerful impression which she made on my heart—and yet the barbarous cruelties which were now, perhaps, perpetrating around

me

me—the narrow escape which I so lately had from a horrid death—my anxiety for my father's fate, and that of our friends; all seemed calculated to form a shield, that would protect me from the arrows of love. But there is a waywardness in our nature, oftentimes moved by contrariety and opposition. It was in vain that I strove to quell this rising fancy, by arraying against it those feelings of delicacy and decorum, which seemed to be more befitting my peculiar situation. This endeavour to exclude from my mind the impression which her image excited, I found, from the effort being always present to my imagination, only imprinted it deeper and more indelibly: and then our feelings were so exactly in unison. Her hopes were drawn from the same sources as my own—her grief was my grief—our joys and our sorrows sprung from the same

cause

cause—and my love was nourished and fed in the very cradle of sympathy.

Montbazon returned late in the evening. His looks were pale and haggard; he spoke but little, and more in anger against our enemies, and muttering wild and incoherent sentences to himself, than affording us the intelligence which we desired, yet dreaded to hear. Of my father he had heard nothing. But he had heard it reported that Coligny was assassinated. He would not suffer me to think of commencing my journey to Paris so soon, and insisted on my still partaking of the secure shelter of their cell.

I confess I now staid willingly, and for several days we avoided any conversation which might lead to the remembrance of our misfortunes. Montbazon related to me the manner in which he discovered their present place of refuge.

" Returning

"Returning one evening alone," said he, "across the forest, I was overtaken "by a thunder-storm, and in seeking "for a place of shelter, found this "cell, which was then inhabited by an "aged hermit. The holy man," continued Montbazon, "died here; he "expired during my stay, and it is "the superstitious belief of the country, that his spirit still haunts the "dwelling which it loved, and is visible on certain evenings, when it "may be seen poring over the holy "fathers at midnight. I am that spirit," said he, "whom some silly "clowns beheld reading in this cell, "and who fled in fear when I shouted "after them. The body of the hermit has never been found, and this "has tended to strengthen this opinion in their minds. I have rather "encouraged than repressed this popular belief; for it gives me undis-

"turbed

" turbed possession of a retreat, which
" has proved my safety when I have
" been obliged to fly from the power
" of my enemies. In searching the
" cell, I discovered a secret subter-
" raneous passage, which leads to a
" spot in the forest overgrown with
" weeds and brushwood; it was there
" you saw me suddenly disappear.
" This passage, which I have con-
" verted into a stable, was, no doubt,
" the way by which our hermit was
" supplied with provisions from the
" monastery of St. Francis, whenever
" he wished to impose on the credu-
" lity of the peasantry, refusing the
" provisions which they were accus-
" tomed to bring him, and affirming,
" have heard related, that the
" food he tasted during his reli-
" gious fervors, was supplied to him
" by the ravens, whom the Almighty
" directed to feed him, as in old time,

" they

" they did Elijah! I have excavated,
" during my leisure hours, a great
" part of the grotto, and here we
" might taste of happiness, could I
" forget the sufferings of our bre-
" thren."

Montbazon resisted all my importunities to be informed on the subject of Edda's parentage. I perceived that his attention was now often forcibly directed towards us. He watched our looks, and would at times stamp and rave in anger, without acquainting us with the cause of this extraordinary emotion. Edda played remarkably well upon the harp. We often brought it before the door of the cell, where we generally sat in the evening. She would throw her ivory arms across it, and sing to its melody, verses whose theme was love and constancy; whilst I hung with rapture over her. Montbazon appeared to be displeased at

these

these scenes; and he would often exclaim that music was offensive to him, and only called up horrible images *in his mind. His looks were then* so sad and fraught with woe, that Edda would cease to play, and I would gaze upon him in doubt, thinking that he also loved her. But Montbazon was old, and a life spent in the toils and hardships of war, added to his aged look, and then his manner was so paternal when he addressed Edda, that I would dismiss this belief from my mind.

At length he became more reserved to me in his manner than at first. He had gloomy fits, during which he would sit for hours brooding over the inward thoughts which troubled him. He drew me aside one evening, and told me, that on the next morning he would accompany me to the high road leading to Paris. "It was now

"time,"

" time," he added, " to investigate " my father's fate, and in the disguise " of a peasant, I might travel to the " gates of Paris in safety."—" And " Edda," replied I unconsciously. " Edda," said he smiling, " will be " very safe here during my absence."

On the next morning we arose at the dawn of day. I took a tender leave of Edda, who appeared affected, even to tears, at my departure. Montbazon, who was acquainted with all the tracks of this wild wood, led me across the hill which rose above the cave. At the foot of it, a way lay through the glen, which brought us, after a walk of some hours, within view of the road leading to the capital. Here he embraced me, and squeezing my hand with affection, he gave me a slip of paper containing some intelligence written in cypher, and the direction of a friend who resided in

Paris,

Paris, in whom I might confide, and who would give me all the assistance I might require.

" Yet if all is lost; if I have no " longer a parent living, may I hope " for protection, once more, at the " grotto in the valley of Chatigny?"

" In the grotto, you will always " find a retreat," he replied; " but it " is too probable that we shall never " meet again."

His manner in repeating these words was troubled and mysterious, and I perceived that he evidently avoided any explanation. Our farewell was gloomy: I quitted Montbazon with my mind darkened with melancholy forebodings. The whole energy of my mind was now employed in contemplating the dangers which lay before me, and in providing resources for the casualties to which I might be exposed on my route. I walked at a main

main pace,—the violence of the exercise, and the observation of new objects imparted more serenity to my mind.

I avoided the great towns, and took my solitary meals beneath the shelter of boughs, which stood remote from public observation. I obtained from the humanity of a vine-dresser, a place where I reposed myself at night; it was a little shed which stood in the vineyard, and almost concealed by the thick foliage of the vine and bunches of grapes. My appearance, and my request to lie apart from his cottage, was sufficient to awaken his suspicion. He looked at me with an air of compassion. "The times," he sighed, "are bad, and you seem to be un-
"fortunate, but God forbid that I
"should add to your miseries by deny-
"ing you shelter."

I reposed that night in safety, and left

left the worthy vine-dresser's at sun-rise. I pursued my journey with the same precaution. At night-fall I was disappointed in not finding a cottage, where I could procure admittance. I perceived that the peasants eyed me with suspicion, and some of them followed me at a distance, evidently watching my steps, with the intention of giving information against me; upon this I took courage, and assuming a careless manner, I entered a cabaret, and demanded a bed. "A sheaf of "straw," replied the host, "is good "enough for such a fellow as you;" he then added, "that if I paid him "before hand, he had no objection "to my lying in the barn." A casual glance which a mirror at that moment afforded of my figure, justified the contempt of mine host, and relieved me from my fears; my face was covered with dust, and bronzed by the heat of

the

the sun; my hair neglected and uncombed, hung over my coarse and tattered garments, and my whole appearance denoted abject and squalid misery. I speedily swallowed some homely provisions which they set before me, and hurried to my straw; but not before I was considerably alarmed by the arrival of the peasants, who had endeavoured to awaken the suspicions of the landlord, by exaggerating the circumstances of my demanding of them a secluded apartment to spend the night in. I had the satisfaction to hear him dismiss them with a volley of oaths, and telling them it was only a poor working lad travelling in search of employment. I had strong reasons for believing that this worthy man knew me, or at least suspected the truth; for before I lay down, he brought me a bottle of his best wine and a cold fowl, and insisted on my

accepting

accepting of them, "as an encouragement," he archly said, "towards prospering on my errand."

After this adventure, I travelled towards the capital, devoid of apprehension.

On the last morning of my journey, perceiving some travellers on horseback approaching, I bent my eyes on the ground, to avoid exposing my features to their observation. My dismay cannot be expressed, when I heard myself addressed by one of them, who called out my name and title. I looked up with fear, and beheld my servant Bertrand, who had accompanied the Count to Paris; he had recognized me in my disguise, by my gait and figure. I perceived a melancholy in his eye, which presaged a great misfortune.

Breathless and agitated, I could only exclaim, "my father!"

Bertrand

Bertrand in a few words informed me, that almost all the leaders of the Hugonots had perished on the fatal night of St. Bartholomew. My father attempted to escape with a few friends, and fled on horseback, half naked, from their assassins: but they were taken after a pursuit of some hours, and now lay in prison, under sentence of death. Bertrand, the worthy Bertrand, when he found that his services could no longer be of use to the Count, had left Paris, with the intention of seeking me, and apprizing me of my father's unfortunate fate.

"He lives! he yet exists! there is "no time to lose," I exclaimed.

Bertrand, who saw through my intention, replied, "that there was no "hope of saving his life." He would have dissuaded me from pursuing my journey to Paris, and represented to me all the dangers to which I should

be exposed; but he could not shake the resolution I had taken.

I mounted Bertrand's horse, ordered him to pursue his way to a cottage which lay near St. Blois, where he might expect to see me in a few days, and where, at all events, he was to wait, until he received some intelligence from me.

"You must ride swift," cried Bertrand, with a gloomy look, "for the "bell of execution was sounding since "sun-rise; he dies to-day at noon!"

I heard no more; with a heart almost bursting with sorrow, I rode, I flew towards Paris. These fatal words rang in my ears, "*he dies to-*"*day at noon!*" My mind, which was solely occupied by this one image, seemed to annihilate space. I beheld in imagination, all the horrible sufferings of the victims of cold-hearted bigots,—"My father!"—I could scarcely

repeat

repeat that hallowed name in a mental aspiration. I deemed it impossible, that he, the warrior, the just, the stedfast of faith, the shrine of so many virtues, could be polluted by a foul and disgraceful death. Heavy rains had fallen near Paris: the roads were flooded, the rivers swollen. I urged my horse in vain, the dreadful thought assailed me; "he suffers! I see him on "the scaffold! he dies! and his child "is deprived of his last blessing."

It now approached the fatal hour. More dead than alive, I reached the gates of Paris. They stopped me at the barriers, and demanded my passport; it was necessary, they said, to have it countersigned, I must wait. God of Heaven! how my blood boiled at the apathy of these wretches.

"My father," I exclaimed wildly, "is about to suffer! I must see him 'ere "he dies!"

"This man must also be a Hugonot," cried one of the guards.

"He must be brought before the "tribunal," cried another.

I could hear no more; the flames which raged within me, spread through me to my very marrow. While the soldiers were intent in calling forth the officer of the guard, I leaped from my horse, which one of them held by the bridle; I darted forward, and rushed down a lane, which led to some bye streets. The door of a mean looking house stood ajar, I slipped in, and closed the door, in the hope of concealing myself for a few minutes, until the heat of the pursuit was over. I advanced on tiptoe through an ill-furnished room. From an adjoining apartment, I heard the soft whispers of a man and woman in earnest discourse. I paused for a moment—my situation was critical. If I escaped from

from my pursuers, I ran the evident risk of being taken and committed as a felon, by ranging through a house in this suspicious manner. While I stood hesitating, a cursed dog came howling at me through the passage. Alarmed at the noise, a woman resembling a fury bolted from the inner apartment, in evident confusion and fear. The door was instantly closed and bolted after her, by the person remaining in the room she had quitted. On viewing my strange appearance, she began to shriek aloud, and implored me by the love of the Virgin, to spare her life. I drew from my bosom a dagger, and told her that another exclamation in the same loud tone, would be fatal to her; she threw herself on her knees, and besought me to spare her life, and she would willingly give me the little money she possessed.

"You mistake me," I cried, "I am

" neither a robber nor a murderer: " particular circumstances demand " that I should remain here for a few " moments, without being exposed to " observation—who is your compani- " on in the adjoining chamber?"

" It is only father Jerome," she replied, " who was shriving me from " my sins."

" And is it thus uncaparisoned," I said, taking up at the same time the monks hood and cowl, which lay on a seat, " that the holy father performs " his sacred functions?"

A terrible crash in the adjoining room, which was followed by a loud groan, deprived her of the power of uttering a reply. " Ah Jesus!" she exclaimed, " the holy father is certainly " killed!"—I looked through the key hole, and was convinced that father Jerome had made his escape. Upon the woman assuring me that her husband

was

was out, and nobody in the house but ourselves, I permitted her to force open the door. The window had slapped to, and on our appearing at the casement, father Jerome, who had leaped from it, at a very dangerous height, and had alighted in a slough, now ran away as swift as the wind, nearly half naked, and covered with filth. The lamentations of the beldam, at the misfortune of the father confessor, were extremely ludicrous. I instantly seized the advantage which this adventure offered to me, and made no scruple to attire myself in the garments of the monk; at the same time I threatened the old wretch with immediate death, if she dared to make the least outcry. Glad to escape so easily, she promised a ready obedience to whatsoever I might command. I ordered her to remain quiet in her apartment; and to secure her promise

more effectually, I locked her up in the middle room, put the key in my pocket, and stole quietly out of the house. Exhausted with fatigue, I at length reached the prison which contained the unfortunate Hugonots. The jailor admitted me with facility, deeming me one of the holy men who give the last consolation to the miserable. The hour was now come, and the jailor led me to the dungeon of the Count.

My unhappy father lay extended on a wretched pallet. I approached him, and whispered to him in a low voice who I was. He received me with a solemn and impressive affection.

" For a few moments," said he to the guards, "leave us alone, I would " have some conversation with this " holy father; leave us for a mo- " ment."

" Be

" Be it no longer then," cried they, " for, recollect your hour is come."

" Is there no way left," said I, " to " save your life? does justice no lon- " ger reign in France?...Curses on " their perfidy—but vengeance...."

" Adolphus," interrupted he, " be " silent. These walls have ears, which " would greedily drink up thy rash " expressions. I shall take vengeance, " saith the Lord; but thou, Adol- " plus, shall not revenge."

Here the guards summoned him. He prayed for a few moments longer, which, with difficulty, they granted."

" Adolphus," he cried, " we have " not an instant to lose; I would im- " part to you a secret of the utmost " importance 'ere I die. Listen to " the words which issue from the " grave, soon about to close on me! " Let them create on thy soul a deep " and lasting impression!"".

" Your blessing, my father,—I hear
" them coming."

" May the Allpowerful watch
" over thee! and lead thee in peace
" through the remainder of thy life!—
" May a pure conscience comfort you
" in your latter end, and a sweet sleep
" steal between you and your pangs,
" on the bed of death! May Christ
" wash away your sins, and may you
" wake to a joyful resurrection!"

" Hark! they are drawing the
" bolts!"

The door flew open; it was Rezzonico. He entered with a smile of triumph playing on his dark and sallow visage. I hastily drew the cowl over my face, bent my eyes upon the ground, and retired within the shade of the Count's pallet. Rezzonico addressed the Count with affected humility—

" I come, my lord, actuated by the
" love

" love I bear your noble house, to con-
" sole you in your last moments; and
" although I have never kept any
" communication with heretics, yet
" from the love I bear you, I am in-
" duced to make you an exception."

" If arguments and pious wishes to
" give me what you would call a con-
" viction of my errors, would console
" me in this solemn hour, you may
" perceive, holy father, your presence
" is not necessary; you see I am al-
" ready provided with a confessor."

" A stranger!" exclaimed Rezzonico, turning towards, and now first observing me.

" A charitable Benedictine, at least,
" you will confess," said the Count,
" since he was actuated in his visit
" neither by interest, pretended af-
" fection, nor *hypocrisy!*"

Rezzonico turned haughtily from the Count, and addressing me in a

tone of affected meekness: "Assist "me," said he, "holy brother, in "saving this chief of an illustrious "house from a disgraceful death in "this world, and from perdition in "the world to come."

The terrible and piercing eyes of Rezzonico were fixed on me during this speech. It was a dreadful moment. A word, a gesture, would have been sufficient to betray me. I remained silent, and clasped my hands in agony.

Rezzonico, who mistook it for an attitude of prayer, exclaimed in a loud voice, "let us pray." He knelt down! and threw up his eyes in a seeming extacy of devotion towards Heaven. "Let us pray, that it may "please Heaven to touch our lips with "the hallowed fire of celestial truth, "in order that we may bring back "this lost one to the ways of God.

"In

"In me, noble Count, behold the "willing arm of thy deliverance, "which shall free you from captivity, "and bring you out of the house of "bondage. Let thine eyes, but even "now, behold the light of life. Re- "nounce the errors of your past life, "and return to the true faith, to that "religion you have deserted. Set "but this seal upon the consummation "of your virtues—let the sign of the "holy cross speak your consent—I "will then fly to my royal master, "and obtain the promise of your "safety."

"The promises of your royal mas- "ter," replied the Count with sarcastic expression, "might have been "binding and sacred ere the massacre "of St. Bartholomew. The flattery "of monks always teaches me to ex- "pect a concealed dagger—I expect

"this

" this from you; for, believe me, Rez-
" zonico, *I know you !*"

Rezzonico on this started up. His countenance changed into a livid and ghastly expression; his lips grew pale, and quivered with smothered anger, while he exclaimed with energy, " Mi-
" serable apostate! there is no sharper
" torture for thee than the dagger
" which sin has planted in thy heart!"

He now turned towards me, and addressed me with solemnity. " Hear
" me, brother! the prophecies of old
" time are fulfilling—The wicked one
" has burst his chains, and roams the
" earth like a roaring lion! False
" prophets arise—some in the east,
" others in the west, and say, Here is
" Christ! there he is! The darkness
" of heresy is overcasting the vail of
" the temple—the foundation pillars
" of religion totter on every side. In

" vain

" vain has the sword of the holy church
" been drawn against the heretic
" Albigenses, against the Hussites,
" and the Tisseranians. In our days
" especially, this hydra of hell has
" raised its dragon head, and the
" world is overrun with sects, who re-
" ceive not their religion from God,
" or his vicegerent, but take their
" creeds from men; weak men, who
" have erected themselves into the
" heads of these several churches.
" These crying judgments, which I
" now relate unto you, may I at the
" day of judgment find written by the
" hand of the recording Angel in the
" book of the crimes of mankind, and
" they will not bear witness against
" me."

The Count replied with dignity, " I
" do not deny, and I have never de-
" nied our true religion. I am a
" Christian, and I hope always shall
" be

" be found a steady one. You say " I am a deserter from the mother " church. No! I only revolt against " monkish and popish bigotry, and " not against the religion which Christ " gave the world. I have carefully " perused God's word, but have not " found what ye so often preached " unto us. Believe me, I am a Chris- " tian, although no papist. I confess " willingly and openly these truths to " you, as the holy martyrs in our " Lord's time have openly confessed " them."

" Ha! enthusiast!" exclaimed Rezzonico, " do you mean that you per- " form a meritorious deed, when you " obstinately give up your life in the " cause of error? Do you pretend to " the holy crown of martyrdom? Yes, " a crown you shall obtain, not in " heaven, but in hell, whose powers " you are in league with. Be it my

" pride,

" pride, my duty, my peculiar vo-
" cation henceforward to pursue thy
" hated sect with fire and sword in
" this world, and with my accusing
" voice in the world to come. Be it
" my triumph to root from off the
" earth thy cursed race. Be it thy
" punishment to know, that, even
" now, thy Adolphus is in my power.
" I quit you now for ever. Prepare
" and tremble, for thine hour is
" come!"

Rezzonico, whose countenance indicated the deadly malice which filled his heart, now abruptly quitted the dungeon. I threw myself into my father's arms, and gave full vent to my tears. Although the menaces of Rezzonico had visibly affected him, yet he remained unshaken in the resolution to yield up his life sooner than the principles of his faith.

Observing my anguish, he tenderly

pressed

pressed my hand between his, and said, "Remember, my Adolphus, those "principles which I have endeavoured "to imprint on your mind from your "earliest years. What! would Adol- "phus counsel dishonour to his pa- "rent and his friend? To exchange "the few short years, or perhaps days, "of an inglorious old age, for my ho- "nour; an unstained name, for pre- "sent approbation and for future fame! "Oh no! Adolphus surely cannot "advise me to commit an action so "base, so cowardly. Recollect the "motto of the friend of my youth. "I have often repeated it to you; let "it console you now. I do not wish "to have a more glorious epitaph "than this simple inscription on my "tomb:—*He was the friend of the Knight without fear and reproach.*"

A noise now on the outside of the dungeon smote me with horror; my father

father collected himself for a moment and then continued, "I must be brief "—you will be soon friendless! fa- "therless!—but there is a friend, a "father. I have written to him, fly "to him, he will protect you; bear "to him this letter, it will explain "all."

While my father was searching for the letter, which he had concealed in his bosom, the guards, provoked at our delay, and instigated by Rezzonico, rushed in, rudely seized him, and bore him off by force in their arms—frantic, I rushed after him; "the letter, "the letter," I exclaimed, while I pursued them down one of the gloomy passages of the prison. "They have "bound me," cried my father in a faint voice. "His name then?"—alas, he was out of hearing.

I mingled with the crowd who had assembled outside of the prison, in order

order to witness the procession of those condemned to suffer on that day—for alas! scarcely a day passed that fresh victims of both sexes were not immolated at the bloody shrine of relentless bigotry. The procession advanced; I easily distinguished the car on which my father stood. His noble air, the command which sat on his brow, gave to him the appearance of the hero of a Roman triumph, rather than that of a victim condemned to an ignominious death. I made my way through the crowd; pale and silent, like a ghost, I followed the car. The pangs of those who suffered yet vibrate within me; the still more dismal cries of those about to suffer, ring in my ears —the [illegible]h fountain of life gushing from the wound, and reddening the ground on which I stood—the quivering of the limbs from the after pang of convulsion—the marble figures of

departed

departed beauty, pale, but retaining a sweet expression of resignation even in death, and their lips vibrating with the last aspirated prayer of a soul flying to its Creator! The recollection of such horrors now rises vividly within me, and agitates my soul!

It now came to my father's turn to suffer; he looked about him on the faces of the crowd below him, with a searching eye. On perceiving me, his eye gave token of pleasure, and he smiled. When they unbound his arms, he caught the letter, which he had concealed under his inner vestments; and approaching the edge of the scaffold, "now, now," he cried, and threw the letter towards me. I sprang forward, I caught it. I drew the cowl still closer over my face. There was a silence still as death! a mist fell on my eyes, my ears rang with hollow murmurs. The rustling of the multitude—

multitude—the faint murmur which succeeded that effort, when each held his breath in expectation—the hollow sound returned from the cart of death on receiving its victim—the beating of drums, the flourish of trumpets; all told me that my father was no more. The strength and fortitude which had supported me through this terrible scene, now deserted me; I fainted and fell.

On recovering my senses, I found myself supported in the arms of a stranger. He was an aged man, whose countenance was impressed with the traits of kindness and benevolence. "Fear not," he exclaimed, "you "are with a friend; I caught you "when you fell, and bore you to "this private way, in order to avoid "the observation of the multitude." I felt grateful to him for this kindness. I attempted to rise; my limbs tottered

tottered under me. I felt inconceivably stupid and heavy; the street appeared to whirl round me, and my brain felt as if it was pressed with consuming fire. I looked around me; there was not a soul in the street, nor within view. A faint idea of some great misfortune which had befallen me now presented itself, and I recollected that the multitude which thronged the busy streets of the metropolis were gathered into one fatal spot. I determined to throw myself upon the kindness of this man.

I sought in my pocket for the direction to Montbazon's friend, Pierre Andelet. "Perhaps, my friend," said I, presenting to him the paper, "you "can direct me." Joy sparkled in his eyes when he beheld the handwriting, and he exclaimed, "I am the "man!"

I threw myself into his arms. "I "suspected

" suspected the truth," said Pierre, " from the moment I observed you " in the crowd—we must away this " instant, there is danger even here."

He carried me rather than led me along. There was a confused hum at the bottom of the street, and presently the gleaming of steel, and the sparkling of many colours, shewed the lengthened line of a distant cavalcade. Pierre faced me abruptly about. " We cannot," exclaimed he, dropping his eyes on the ground, " pro- " ceed that way." I understood his meaning, and we proceeded in silence. After assisting me through many streets, for I still continued very weak and faint, he suddenly stopped before the court of a large and magnificent hotel; the walls were high and massy, and the embrasures were filled with cannon. My mind instantly misgave me. Was I deceived in attributing a friendly disposition

disposition to this man? Could he have meditated so black a piece of treachery, as to betray me into the power of the court? Did not his joy on perusing the billet of Montbazon arise from the certainty of his possessing his victim in his power? Pierre knocked at the gate. "We are arriv-" ed," exclaimed he, in a surly tone. —Overcome by my fears, I threw myself at his feet and bedewed them with my tears—I besought him to recollect his promise, to save and protect me. I begged for mercy. "Rise," cried he. A wicket door of the court was now thrown open. "Enter," cried Pierre, with a spiteful look, while he thrust me forward with a violent push. The door was immediately closed and barred, and Pierre and I stood alone in the interior of a spacious court. He instantly recovered the amenity and benevolence of his first looks. I looked

on him with surprize and astonishment. I knew not what to think, but a fear of this strange man still predominated in my mind.—" You are " now," said Pierre, with a satisfied air, " past all danger,—give God " thanks! and not that abominable " habit which you wear."

I instantly disengaged myself from the monks vestments,—" It is well " done," said Pierre, " our steps " were watched to the very portal, by " two cursed spies, and no doubt it " was cause enough of suspicion, to " see Pierre Andelot, and a Father " Confessor linked arm and arm toge- " ther; for it is well known that I am " a Hugonot, and I should have suf- " fered for my faith long since, only " that I serve a virtuous and powerful " master who protects me. Many of " our brethren have fled for refuge " here, and my master, the Count de

Sully,

" Sully, has received them and lined
" his walls with cannon to protect
" them.—Forgive me for using you
" thus harshly, but it was necessary
" that I should do so to save your
" life, for if your rank should be dis-
" covered it might not be in the power
" of even the Count, my master, to
" protect you."

I felt convinced of the justness of Pierre's remarks, and was satisfied with his apology. He led me round the court, avoiding the grand front, to a small summer pavilion which stood in the garden. " This is my dwelling," said Pierre, " here you may rest con-
" cealed. You may pass for a labour-
" ing youth of whom I stood in need,
" to help me in the work of the gar-
" den. Be careful not to discover
" yourself; let your words and deport-
" ment be suitable to your dress and
" occupation."

I readily promised obedience, and Pierre shewed me my apartment and acquainted me with the duties of my office. Observing that I looked ill and fatigued, he made me take some refreshment, and then assisted in putting me to bed. A fit of illness, which was the consequence of my fatigue and grief, confined me for several days to my bed, during which time the worthy Pierre attended me with all the tenderness of a parent.

The first effort of my returning reason was to examine the letter, which I still retained in my possession by a wonderful chance.—I hastily tore open the envelope which contained it: it was addressed simply to "Count "Magnus Mörner".....

LAURENTIUS and AXEL. *(as if stunned with surprize).* Count Magnus Mörner?

ULRICA, CARL, and CHRISTINA, *(repeating*

peating with horror and amazement). Mörner!

ADOLPHUS. Yes, my friends, Count Mörner. There was no direction to his residence, my father in his haste had omitted it. I felt therefore totally at a loss to discover the abode of my father's tried friend, and this reflection filled me with deep sorrow. When I was able to go out I worked with Pierre in the garden; for he would allow of no excuse for idleness. He would often drive me with downright force from those reveries in which I was prone to indulge. He would exclaim, "where "is the good that will arise from all "this thinking? shew me the fruit of "it. Will it feed you, or clothe you, "or give you better health? Can a "fruitless and unavailing yielding up "of the soul to sorrow benefit the "living? Can it give repose to the "dead? Work, young man; hard

" and personal labour, is a specific
" against sorrow, sickness, and want.
" Perhaps your heart is inflated with
" pride—perhaps you are ashamed to
" work, because, forsooth, you are
" of noble race! What avails your
" nobility to you in your need? Has
" it protected you from the shame of
" owing your existence and support,
" even to such a one as me?"

In this manner would he reprove me, when I gave way to my grief. There was a hardihood in Pierre's ideas, and a strait forward manner of arguing, which struck with infinite force when it did not entirely convince. I murmured inwardly at what I thought was the arbitrary conduct of a vulgar tyrant, but I was nevertheless forced to yield to him, even in my most irksome moods. From sun-rise to sun-set the spade was constantly in my hands. This incessant occupation

tion, with which at first I was disgusted, had charms for me in a few days. I found that it completely banished thought and retrospection; and when I remained sufficiently long at any species of work to beget reflection, there was Pierre shouting at me, and directing me to new labours in every corner of the garden. It now appeared to me that kindness and compassion were at the bottom of this plan. My health gradually amended. When I retired to rest, a sweet and sound sleep, the reward of labour and of light simple nourishment, gave all my sorrows and cares to oblivion.

One evening Pierre's affairs obliged him to be absent for several hours. I threw myself under the shade of a tree, which spread its rude branches across the course of a little rivulet which ran through the garden, and supplied it with water; I gave free

vent to my sorrow, and took a melancholy pleasure in seeing my tears dimpling the surface of the stream. " Ah!" I exclaimed, " when shall happiness " again be the lot of the offspring of " the unfortunate De Beaumarchais?"

" De Beaumarchais!" repeated a voice behind me. I started up in consternation. I beheld a gentleman whose physiognomy impressed me with a singular feeling of awe and admiration. He advanced courteously towards me. " The name which I have " just heard you pronounce," said he, " has excited my curiosity. Observe, " I do not wish to be gratified at the " expense of your safety; but allow " me to demand, who and what you " are? and whether you are employed " by any of my people?"

" I felt quite confused at this unexpected address; I stammered out the name and designation which Pierre had

had desired me to assume; but I so totally forgot his cautions, that I replied to the Count's salute with the most polite air in the world, and he departed from me with an incredulous and thoughtful mien, without putting to me any more questions.

I imparted every thing to Pierre on his return; he grew outrageous on hearing this intelligence. It was impossible to confide in the Count, as there had been a proclamation issued by the court for my apprehension. It was even reported that I was concealed in the Hôtel de Sully, and the good intentions of the Count might be of no avail against the powerful threats or persuasions of the court. "The "Count has seen through your dis-"guise," said Pierre, "and is well "assured that you are the person de-"scribed in the proclamation. Here "you have no longer any conceal-

" ment, and therefore I cannot an-
" swer for your safety." He appeared to reflect for a few minutes, and I felt a secret joy at an idea which presented itself: it was the thought of once more rejoining Montbazon and the fair Edda, and sharing again the protection of the grotto of the valley of Chatigny. " I have it," said Pierre; " by to-morrow's dawn, you can pass " the barriers of Páris in safety."

Pierre now explained his plan. He was in the habit of sending vegetables to an aged woman, a relation of his, who lived at a short distance from Paris; he gave orders that the cart should be in readiness on the next morning, earlier than usual, and he proposed that I should conceal myself in the hamper in which they were packed. I was delighted with this plan, which seemed to give every security to my escape.

Early

Early in the morning I took leave of Pierre Andelet, and after a drive of some hours, we arrived at the good old woman's cottage, who was apprised by a billet from Pierre of the circumstances which obliged me to conceal myself, and she afforded me an hospitable reception. After refreshing myself and resting some hours, I set out once more for the valley of Chatigny. My journey was marked by no events of importance. I turned out of my road to visit St. Blois. Alas! a heap of ruins, blackened by smoke, and disfigured by the ravages of fire, now stood in the place of the castle of my ancestors, and I shed many tears over all that remained of the once magnificent St. Blois.

I strayed for hours through these deserted walls, when I was startled on seeing a figure moving at a distance, and seemingly rising from the founda-

tions. He was approaching the place where I stood, and I concealed myself behind the fragments of a broken arch, that I might observe him unperceived. It was a Franciscan Monk, and from the tallness of his figure, and the measured solemnity of his step, I felt assured that it was Rezzonico; but I found it impossible to catch a glimpse of his features, so carefully were they concealed by his hood. He carried a small iron box under his arm, the weight of which seemed to discompose him. He looked about him several times cautiously to discover if he was observed; and at length I lost sight of him, in one of the turns of the ruined corridore along which he had passed. The thought occurred to me for a moment of pursuing this villain, and immolating him to the manes of my father; but reflection taught me to recoil from the injustice of the unequal

equal struggle between his grey hairs, and the greenness of my youth; and the recollection of my father's exhortations to me 'ere he suffered, induced me to leave vengeance in the hands of Providence.

On the same evening I joined my servant Bertrand at the cottage I had appointed. I wished now to part with this faithful domestic; it was impossible for me to keep him with my diminished resources, and about to become an exile from my native country. He insisted, however, on accompanying me, and declared that go where I would he would follow me, if it was even on foot. I yielded to his intreaties, and he has unfortunately exchanged the pleasant residence of his native country, only to become a witness of my calamities, distresses, and disappointments, and to meet with a premature death in a foreign land!

We

We now proceeded to the valley of Chatigny. I had marked the path which led to the cave by many observations, which still remained impressed on my memory. On arriving at the grotto, to my utter disappointment I found that Montbazon and Edda had quitted it, and from the appearance of the interior, I judged that they had left it a considerable time. I remained here for several days reflecting on the means of escaping from France.

During this interval, I had visited the steward of St. Blois, who willingly gave into my hands the money he had received; but he communicated to me at the same time the intelligence, that a process had commenced, and in consequence of the attainder of my father, he was directed to pay the proceeds in future to the Count d'Auvergne, who was appointed to receive them on behalf of the Countess Marcellina. This

intelligence

intelligence fortified me in the resolution I had taken, to quit France for ever.

We left the grotto, and assuming the disguise of peasants, we arrived in safety on the banks of the Rhine. I kissed with fervour the German shore, which gave me once more the prospect of a life of freedom, and liberty of conscience. I stood for some minutes at the door of the post-house, in a stupor of solitary abstraction. Bertrand approached me and demanded whither I would proceed? The world now lay before me. I had only to choose; but all places seemed alike, all equally desirable, after being under the necessity of flying from my unhappy country. I almost mechanically answered Bertrand, "*to Leipzig.*"

It was near the commencement of winter, when we arrived at the celebrated *Fontaine d'Or*, in that city.

The

The season was sad and cheerless; there was a struggle between the sickly sun-beams of departing autumn, and heavy clouds borne along by melancholy gusts of wind, which presaged the severity of a winter unknown to the milder climates of the south. The aspect of nature, so sad in the forms which then met my eye, gave a darker hue to my thoughts; and the heavy figures of the Germans in their dismal winter clothing, appeared to move around me in a state of torpid existence, and resembled the gloomy and indistinct forms, which may be discerned in the still shadows of a dark and dreary landscape

The inns of Leipzig were crowded with strangers, in consequence of the celebration of a solemn festival. I was shewn into a room where there were several travellers assembled; there were officers and merchants of

different

different countries, and I could distinguish by their dress, Poles, Russians, Italians, Hungarians, and Bohemians. The glass was briskly circulated early in the evening, while the wind sighed through the crevices, and the heavy antique casements creaked and rattled with the violence of the storm. But, with the high piled blazing fire on the hearth, and the full goblets of old Rhenish, we fared right well.

The laugh, the song, the jest, lent wings to the evening. But. . .there sat at the festive board, a stranger, who neither laughed, sung nor joked. He was clad in the coarse, dark and flowing robe of the Hungarian Jews, who carry on traffic between that country and the provinces under the dominion of Turkey; but beyond this, he had nothing in common with the stock of Israel. His hair was white as snow, and

and his countenance, in form and colour, was Italian. He seldom spoke, and when he did, his voice had in its tones something so sepulchral, and so chearless, as to petrify the youngest and the merriest of the company into silence. He had evaded with singular adroitness every attempt which was made to satisfy our curiosity, with respect to his name, occupation and country. Several of the company had privately enquired of our host, whether he was informed of these particulars? to which he had answered in the negative, adding, that he had never seen him before, and that he had arrived at Leipzig without either baggage or attendants.

The strangers now separated into different parties; games of chance were introduced, and the attention of every one seemed absorbed in their game. The play soon ran high, and large

large sums were won and lost in a moment. I had declined play, and walked from table to table, looking over the players, and watching the interest of the game. The stranger sat alone on the hearth: he took out a long Turkish pipe, and prepared to smoke, appearing regardless of what was going forward. I had hitherto avoided addressing this singular being; I now advanced towards him, and endeavoured to commence a conversation, to which he answered only by monosyllables. I demanded if he had ever visited Paris? he replied in the affirmative. On my enquiring how long since; "perhaps," answered he, fixing his eyes upon me, "at the hour when the bell tolled for "the execution of the Count de "Beaumarchais."

I stood aghast: "this is extraordi- "nary," I repeated mentally.

"No," said the stranger calmly, "it

" it is in no way extraordinary, that I " should have witnessed, and recollect- " ed so remarkable an event."

I was about to reply, he caught my arm, and pointed my attention to one of the card tables; " do you mark?" exclaimed he. An officer in the uniform of a colonel of hulans sat with his back towards us, and at that moment, with great dexterity, had slipped a card behind him. " Do you " observe?" reiterated the stranger. We remained silent for some minutes, awaiting the result.

The officer drew towards him the stake, which was a very large sum, and instantly a confusion arose at the table; the players who were opposed to him arising, and exclaiming, " foul " play." After a long and violent altercation, the whole party agreed to allow the point in dispute to be determined by me. I affected to judge simply of the

the point which was referred to me, without making the least use of the deception I had witnessed. The officer was young and handsome; there was a certain air of fashion and gallantry in his manners, which distinguished him from those wretches who pursue gambling, and those base arts which deceive the unweary dupe, as a means of gaining a miserable livelihood. I determined therefore not to compromise the honour of this unfortunate young man, and yet to do ample justice between the parties. I decided against the officer, and decreed that the stake should be returned. His eyes sparkled with rage and indignation the moment he heard my decision. He eyed me from head to foot with a look of contempt, and upbraided me as an accomplice of sharpers, who had laid a plan to ruin him. All the strangers at this moment

rose

rose from their games, and approached the scene of our dispute. I waited patiently until the officer had exhausted the violence of his abuse, and was about to reply, when the Hungarian stranger walked over from the fire-place, interruped me, and addressed the company.

There was a general silence, and even the officer seemed to expect his opinion with some degree of anxiety. "There is one witness, gentlemen," exclaimed the stranger, "which I shall "have the honour of introducing to "you, which must set this matter en-"tirely at rest, and now I beg leave to "produce him in open court."

So saying, the stranger with great dexterity drew forth from the colonel's pocket the fatal card, and threw it on the table, before he was aware of the stranger's intention.

There arose now a scene of unparal-

leled

leled confusion; the losers threw themselves on the colonel, in order to repossess themselves of their money; he drew his sword, to defend himself; the tables were overturned, the candles thrown down and extinguished.

I hastily quitted the room, and while groping along a dark corridore, which led to the bed rooms, I encountered a hand of prodigious force, which grasped me by the breast, and held me completely at bay. I endeavoured to disengage myself, but in vain; the letter which was addressed to Count Mörner by my father was fastened within my bosom, and I observed that the object of the unknown was to obtain possession of it. The noise occasioned by our struggling and by the riot which had taken place in the room I had quitted, brought up the landlord and his attendants with lights, when I found myself released from the

grasp

grasp of my unknown persecutor; but after the most accurate search, I found it impossible to ascertain the person who attacked me. My bedroom was literally situated in the roof of the inn. The great concourse of strangers had deprived me of a choice of apartments. I quickly undressed, and threw myself on a wretched bed, where I slept for some hours, until I was awakened by some noise in the chamber. I was impressed immediately with the idea that day was breaking, from the light which streamed into my chamber from a grated window, which was situated in the roof, directly over my bed. The shifting of the clouds gave to my view the moon, which was now at the full; it illuminated every object in my room immediately under the casement; but at the remote end of the chamber it was more difficult to distinguish objects; I could, however, plainly discern

cern a tall figure in the gloom, which resembled the mysterious Hungarian. I raised myself up in the bed, and addressed it, but received no answer. After a moment's silence, the figure exclaimed, in a solemn tone of voice, "Once more we shall meet in Bo-"hemia, at the castle of Glatz." I was about to question the figure further, when it vanished, leaving me in doubt whether it was not a mere illusion of the brain, raised from the vapours of the wine I had been drinking during the evening, or the Hungarian himself, who had penetrated by some means into my chamber. I searched the apartment carefully, without finding any communication with an adjoining one.

I lay awake until it was time to rise, pondering on these strange events; and the result of my determination was to fulfil the prophecy of the Hun-

garian, by shaping my course towards the castle of Glatz in Bohemia, if in truth such a place existed in nature, and was not the wild coinage of the old man's brain. The faces which were familiar to me on the preceding evening had now disappeared; other travellers, equally ardent in the pursuit of pleasure or of business, had occupied their places. I found on inquiry, they had no knowledge of the remarkable stranger, who had given rise to so much observation on the preceding evening. The Hungarian had disappeared with the earliest dawn of day, and we were foiled in our attempts to discover his route.

I left the Fontaine d'Or early in the day, and travelled with expedition towards Bohemia. I was informed at Dresden, that the castle of Glatz was the residence of the aged Prince de Zaremberg; but I could obtain no infor-

information respecting the Hungarian, nor concerning Montbazon and Edda, for whom I made the most anxious inquiries at each town I passed in my route. In the course of a few days, I approached the residence of the Prince.

The castle of Glatz lay in a desolate and gloomy tract of country, which was covered with forests to the extent of many miles round; mountains of a dark and ferruginous tint reared their heads in the distance, on which a covering of thick clouds almost constantly rested. I resolved to proceed thither that very evening, although the weather was severe, the air piercing cold, and the snow lay on the ground. It was late when we arrived. I looked up, and beheld the lights passing to and fro in the windows of the castle. I examined eagerly the countenances of the domestics as they passed, and would have persuaded myself that they were

familiar to me. I looked round, and expected every moment to see the Hungarian emerge from the surrounding gloom; and I became impressed with a strong and preternatural warning, that the hour was approaching speedily and terribly, whose influence was to predominate, and give a colouring to the remaining span of my existence. The grating of the castle door on its heavy hinges awoke me from my reverie. I enquired for the Prince de Zaremberg. "He is at home," replied the porter.

They shewed me into an anti-room, and requested me to say whom they should announce to their master. "It "is no matter," I replied, "a stranger "wishes a few moments audience." The man desired me to follow him; he threw open the folding doors of an apartment magnificently furnished; "this," said he, "is the Prince de "Zaremberg."

"Zaremberg." I beheld a grey-headed old man, who received me rather coldly, but with the manners of high birth. I mentioned to the Prince my name and title, and demanded his permission to remain that night at the castle; as the severity of the weather and the lateness of the hour would not allow me to pursue my journey in safety. He granted my request in terms of great kindness; and after putting to me various questions respecting the internal state of France, he added, that I must surely stand in need of some refreshment, and requested I would allow him to introduce me to his family circle, who were assembled at supper.

The Prince led the way, and I followed him into a superb saloon, which was brilliantly illuminated. Several ladies and gentlemen were seated at the supper table. A loud shriek on my

entrance directed my attention to the upper end of the table, where I beheld Edda—and opposite to her sat Montbazon! Thus then, I mentally ejaculated, the Hungarian has directed me to the friends who are dearest to my heart! Montbazon did not receive me with the warmth which I might have expected; the blushes which mantled on Edda's cheek, taught me to believe, that my presence was not displeasing to her. The Prince expressed his satisfaction at my having met with friends under his roof; and on presenting me to the gentlemen of his suite, he expressed his wish, that they might by their attentions induce me to prolong my stay at Glatz. I felt delighted to accept this invitation of the Prince.

The evening passed in conversation with Montbazon and Edda. He was acquainted with the melancholy catastrophe

trophe of my father, and expressed his surprise at my being able to escape from so many dangers. I demanded of him if he was acquainted with the residence of Count Mörner, to whom my father's letter was directed? He started and turned pale at this question, but recovered himself in a few minutes, and directed me to seek him in Sweden. I perceived from his manner that he did not wish to dilate on this subject; but he seemed pleased when I expressed my intention of setting out in a few days, in pursuit of my father's friend. Montbazon then turned the conversation on the Prince; and after a long eulogium on his character, he summed up all his excellencies in these words, "that he was "an honest man, and a good Luthe- "ran. He has never, however," continued Montbazon, "recovered from "the shock he received in the loss of

" his eldest son, who disappeared in
" a most extraordinary manner about
" twenty years ago in the north of Eu-
" rope; his only remaining hope, on
" whom all the family honours will de-
" scend, is a young debauchee, who
" will inevitably soon bring his father's
" grey hairs in sorrow and disgrace to
" the grave."

Two months passed at the castle of Glatz, in a succession of amusements and dissipation; which completely drove from my recollection the last injunction of my dying father, and my proposed visit to the north of Europe. It was now about to be recalled to my mind in a very remarkable manner, and I was about to suffer the punishment which was due to my disobedience.

A considerable bustle which prevailed in the castle one morning, announced the arrival of the son of the

Prince.

Prince. On assembling at dinner, Colonel Wildebrand de Zaremberg was presented to me in form; but judge of my astonishment, when I beheld the young Colonel against whom I gave the decision at the Fontaine d'Or at Leipzig. The emotions which I experienced on being introduced to him, were painful in the extreme. He recognized me at the first glance; and from the effrontery with which he conducted himself, and the nonchalence of his manner, I concluded that his character was effectually depraved. He seated himself beside Edda during dinner; his attentions to her were very marked, but I could perceive from the glances which she directed towards me, that she received his civilities with a considerable degree of repugnance. From the marked preference which Edda shewed me when I approached them, Wildebrand

 became

became furiously jealous. His manner towards her was that of a declared lover; and I saw with considerable dismay, that the Prince favoured the intentions of his son. I endured this state of torture for more than a week, when I applied to Montbazon to inform me, if it was true that Edda was about to become the wife of Wildebrand. Montbazon affected not to perceive the agitation of my manner, nor the hopes and fears which were painted in my countenance; and replied coldly, that Edda had dismissed Wildebrand with a decisive refusal. And he added drily, that the sooner I dismissed her from my thoughts, and myself from Glatz, the more conducive it would prove to the repose of all parties.

This intelligence gave me considerable pleasure. My first impulse was to throw myself at the feet of Edda, and implore

implore her to make a declaration in my favour; but, on reflection, I could not endure the thought of degrading the object of my love, by making her the associate of my toils, and perhaps of my poverty. I felt too proud as the descendant of an illustrious house, to accept the means of subsistence in any shape, but that of honourable employment: and I could not conceal from myself that the pains and humiliation of poverty were real evils, which however endurable by myself, would become miseries too weighty to bear, if I beheld them embittering the lot of the woman I adored.

My mind was calmed by these reflections, and I carried myself sufficiently reasonable for a lover, who has just gained a victory over a formidable rival. However, my triumph was too visible in the eyes of Wildebrand. From that day he seemed to have vow-

ed my destruction, without in the least degree relaxing in those attentions he usually paid to Edda. At times the brutality of his nature would break through that polish, which chivalry bestows on those who are dedicated to arms and to honour; she has then felt herself insulted by his insolence, and my blood has boiled within me, at witnessing the impertinence of this coxcomb, which I could not presume to take notice of in the presence of Montbazon and the Prince, who, from their age and situation, ought to be her natural protectors.

My situation at Glatz became every day more unpleasant. The Prince's wishes for the marriage of Wildebrand, were founded on the hopes he entertained of its proving the means of his reformation. He now saw very clearly the ascendancy I had gained over his son in Edda's mind, and he began to

treat

treat me with an unusual degree of coldness. It was natural for him to imagine that I was the only obstacle to his son's happiness. Instigated by these reasons, and by the arguments of Montbazon, who endeavoured to dispel every illusion of hope, I determined to quit the castle of Glatz, and made preparations to leave it in a few days. Passing along one of the long galleries of this ancient castle, which led to my chamber, while Bertrand walked before me with a lamp, in order to light me to bed, a sudden gust of wind, which rushed from one of the loopholes of the passage (for the castle had been lately strongly fortified) extinguished the light. I directed him to descend into the great hall, which lay at some distance, in order to light it; while I, buried in reverie, slowly paced the passage, which had no light, save the twinkling of the stars, which

were

were visible through the loopholes in the upper part of the walls. I heard the sound of feet in one of the adjoining chambers, and as I had been informed that these apartments were not inhabited, I listened attentively, imagining that banditti might have broken into the castle. While I stood, the door of the chamber was suddenly thrown open; I instinctively threw my hand on my sword, and drew it, 'ere I perceived the Hungarian, in the same dress he wore at the Fontaine d'Or. My tongue was tied with astonishment. Sacred God! was I the dupe of enchantment, or the malice of demons? or was it one of those sainted shades, who are permitted to walk their earthly rounds, and give betimes to the innocent, a warning of the evil to come? The Hungarian ended my reflections by exclaiming, "There is "a plot against your life—fly from

"Glatz,

" Glatz, if you would preserve exis-
" tence,—fly to-morrow, before the
" hour of midnight." On saying this, the door was clapped to suddenly in my face. I was on the point of rushing on the hoary cheat, for such I thought him, when he frustrated my intention by effectually securing the entrance of the chamber. Bertrand at this moment appeared with the light. I determined to rouse the castle. I held it not safe, nor just, to retire to my bed without awakening the Prince and his people.

I hastened down the staircase and tolled the great alarm bell. In a few minutes the Prince, in his robe-de-chambre, and his people, who had but lately retired to rest, appeared with lights, approaching the gallery, whither my shouts and Bertrand's cries had attracted them. The Prince was astonished at my relation, but I concealed

cealed the prediction of my life being in danger. He denied all knowledge of the Hungarian, and the seneschal appearing then with the keys of the castle, he testified, agreeable to what the Prince had also mentioned, that the room which I had pointed out to him as the one from which the Hungarian had issued, was used for many years as a magazine for decayed stores. I was confident that it was the very room; the rooms which led into the corridore were distinguished from it by their distance and the different appearance of their respective doors, so that it was impossible to make any mistake. The seneschal unlocked the door and led the way, every thing was in its usual place, piles of iron balls, bombs, gun-carriages, torches of Greek fire, rusty blades, helmets, and carbines; such were the contents of the room. The fire-place had been built up

half

half a century before; the windows were at an immense distance from the floor, and they ran up to the roof in compartments which were too narrow to admit the body of a man. There was not another door in the room, but that by which we had entered.

After searching most carefully, we found nothing which could give us the slightest cause of suspicion. I confess I never felt so astounded. I felt a degree of shame and humiliation such as I have never experienced. There seemed an utter impossibility of any deception, after the careful inspection we had taken of the apartment; this offered every excuse for their incredulity, and afforded but too strong a proof that I must have been imposed on by some wandering of the imagination. I retired to rest in a state of mind not to be described. I felt that I was become the sport of some unknown

being,

being, who held in his hands the thread of my destiny, who appeared to dispose of me at will,—who haunted my footsteps, — who seemed acquainted with the events of my life,—who penetrated my most secret thoughts, and who appeared to lift the veil which covered futurity. At times I shuddered to think that he might be my evil genius whose design was to tempt me with vice, and leading me step by step, plunge me into an abyss of crime; and again, I flattered myself with believing that he was commissioned to guard the path of life in which I was doomed to move, and to point out to me the dangers with which it was beset. Wearied with conjecture I could draw no conclusion which did not become the mockery of my understanding and more sober reason.

I determined, at all events, to follow the advice of the unknown, and

as he had not as yet deceived me, I was bound to give some faith to his words. I announced this resolution on the following morning; the Prince was surprised but did not seem displeased at my quitting Glatz in this abrupt manner. Wildebrand, whom on all occasions I delighted to avoid, had joined some friends on a hunting party the day before. I shall pass over my separation with Edda; those who have loved will do me justice for concealing those feelings it has ever been impossible to describe, and I wish to confine myself to the description of those extraordinary events which seem to constitute the inexplicable mystery of my fate.

It was late when we left the castle; mounted on a pair of the Prince's swiftest horses. I took the direct road leading to Dresden, meaning to direct my course from thence down the Elbe to Hamburgh,

Hamburgh, from whence I intended to take my passage to the north of Europe. We had not proceeded above a league when we entered the forests which surrounded the castle of Glatz. We continued for many miles to pass through the depths of these woods. The wind, mixed with sleet and rain, blew in our faces,—we quickened our speed, in the hope of reaching some hamlet before night fall, where we might obtain shelter from the inclemency of the weather. The snow had fallen pretty deep the night before, and unfortunately my horse made a false step and fell under me; I escaped with a slight contusion, but on examining the horse I found he was completly lame. This was an unpleasant occurrence, for according to my computation, we were yet many miles distant from any dwelling. I mounted Bertrand's horse and desired him to lead

lead mine as well as he could after me.

We crept on in this manner for some time. The howling of the wolves in the forest at times frightened our horses so much that we found it difficult to hold them, and they often refused to proceed; while the creaking of the branches of the old and blighted pines filled us with a thousand vain alarms. The moon which had been obscured by heavy clouds, now threw her full splendour around us. My horse suddenly started. I looked forward to discover the object which alarmed him. I perceived something dark and resembling the imperfect figure of a man, lying across the road on the frozen snow, while a large animal lay howling on his prostrate body. I immediately suspected that it was one of the ravenous wolves which infested the forest, who was preying on the remains

of

of some unhappy traveller. I drew out one of my pistols and cocking it, desired Bertrand to be prepared with another, and not to discharge his pistol until we approached a little nearer. On our moving forward, the barking of a large dog dispelled our fears. The animal approached us wagging his tail, and by dismal moans seemed to implore our assistance.—I dismounted and examined the body. I found it was a peasant, who lay quite stiffened with cold. The poor creature could hardly articulate his thanks for the assistance rendered to him. I poured some cordial down his throat, which so far revived him that he found himself in a few minutes able to rise with our assistance. His poor dog, delighted to see his master recalled to life, frisked around us, bounding with joy, and licked our hands in expression of his mute gratitude. I enquired from the

peasant

peasant how far we had to proceed to the next village, and described to him the misfortune which had happened to my horse.

" You are six hours journey," he replied, " from the nearest hamlet,— " the ways are bad, and this forest none " of the safest. My cot is only an " hour's walk to the left—there, where " yonder swamp delves through the " forest; come and fix yourselves there " for the night. I can promise you " nothing but a fire, a tight roof, and " a welcome; as for food I can't pro- " mise you much. Besides, you will " never make your way to the town " to-night. I am myself a better tra- " veller, and used to all weathers here " —I expected to make a good long " journey, 'ere night fall, when all of " a sudden, the frost seized me with " a cramp in the leg.—To be sure, it " was'nt the devil, but my good an-

gel,

" gel.—I never set out with so heavy
" a heart in my life.—Ah! a bad con-
" science is but a poor travelling com-
" panion."

I looked on the man as the moon lit up his face. His countenance was squalid, and his beard was overgrown and bushy; his whole appearance savage and ferocious: yet there was a truth and artlessness in his manner which singularly excited my confidence in his professions. The horse which Bertrand led was so completely disabled that it was impossible to think of proceeding much further. If I sought the next village alone, I left Bertrand to the mercy of this man. To remain together in the forest much longer was to run the risk of perishing with cold. I desermined therefore on leaving the event and accompanying our ill-looking companion to his cottage.

After

After pursuing the open road for about a mile, our guide stopped suddenly before a little path, tangled with branches and wild plants, which led down through a dark vista of the wood.—" This is the way, gentlemen, " to my cottage ; if you please you " will lead your horses, as this path " is none of the straightest."

On saying this, he moved onwards to remove a swing bar which was fastened between two pines, to which was attached a noose and trap for catching game; in doing which, his long black cloak was loosened, and I discovered that he was armed with a cutlass and two large horse pistols, which were thrust into his belt. I must own, when I accepted of his invitation, I imagined that he was a mere peasant,—his arms seemed to belie this conjecture.—We had now, however, advanced too far to recede.—

I hinted to Bertrand my apprehensions, and desired him to have his pistols in readiness. I now followed the stranger, relying for my protection on the service which I had rendered to him.

In a few minutes we arrived at a miserable hut, built of wooden shingles. On his rapping at the door, a female voice cried out, "Who knocks?" "'Tis Conrad," answered our guide, "quick, open the door." The bolt was withdrawn, we fastened our horses on the outside of the door, and entered the hut. A fire blazed in the hearth, and by it sat a miserable woman; a sickly child, pale as ashes, lay on her lap, and while she rubbed the child by the fire, to give it warmth, its cries, which sounded like the wailings of some departing spirit, penetrated to the recesses of the heart. Another child lay on a wretched bed, while a

boy

boy of eleven years old stood by the door, which he had opened, shivering in his ragged shirt. "Returned so "soon!" said the woman in a sulky tone to Conrad; "have you brought "your children bread?" "Bread! "Bread!" echoed the children in piteous voices. Conrad, without speaking to his wretched family, brought over stools for us, and placed them near the fire. I sat down, and contemplated this scene of misery in silence. The two elder children now surrounded their father, and searched the hunting bag, which hung from his waist, for provisions; they began to cry bitterly at their disappointment.

"Where is the remainder of yes-"terday's loaf?" demanded Conrad gruffly.

"Wretched man! do you forget "you shared it with the starving beg-"gar who applied to you yesterday

" for charity.—Charity from us!—
" God of justice, where is thine?—
" Out, out, and seek provisions 'ere
" they starve!"

" It snows and storms without at
" such a rate," replied Conrad, " one
" would hardly drive out a dog in
" such weather."

" Look at thy infant," said his wife, " the life's blood no more comes
" from its heart—how it pants, and
" gasps for breath!—and look, its eyes
" how fixed and glassy; it can no
" longer behold us; it is looking at
" death! What a cold sweat stands
" on its forehead, as if something im-
" mortal had breathed on it! Out,
" Conrad—out, and prepare its coffin!"

Here the woman, whose intellects grief seemed to have disordered, began to sing a wild and melancholy ditty over her dying infant.

" My good people," I exclaimed,
" I shall

" I shall feel happy to share with you
" the little store I possess. Go, Ber-
" trand, bring in your haversack, and
" share its contents with this good
" woman."

On this the children crowded round me, delighted to hear they were about to obtain food. In a few minutes Bertrand returned with a countenance pale with terror. " Oh! my dear
" master, it is gone, it is lost!"

" *Lost, lost!*" repeated the children.

" The haversack," continued Bertrand, " in which I had tied up an
" ample store of cold provisions, and
" not forgetting plenty of cordials, I
" fastened, as I thought, secure enough
" on the outside of the portmanteau.
" It is no where to be found. On the
" white snow, one could discern now
" the track of a hare. I should cer-
" tainly have found it, if it had only

" dropt from the saddle. I should " have found it in our track. It is " that cursed dog who has run away " with it."

In this supposition, as a natural one, I joined, when Conrad said, he could answer for the fidelity of his dog.

" Behold these poor children," exclaimed he, " when yesterday they of- " fered food to Wolf, and would have " shared their morsel with him, the " poor creature refused to deprive " them of a part of their poor pittance, " and lay down, as if he was sick, all " the day under the bed."

We all now made a search after Wolf, and his name was repeated until the forest rung again—he was no where to be found. " He is not idle, I war- " rant," muttered Conrad.

Conrad now took our horses, and placed them in a little shed at the back of the cottage. On his return,

he

he prepared a little bed for me. Bertrand was to sit up all night, in order to keep watch, according to the secret directions I had given him. I only lay down upon the bed—I could not close my eyes. Sundry circumstances had strengthened the suspicions which I entertained of Conrad, and I was apprehensive that more of his gang would join him in the night. I suspected that he had deferred his plan of robbery, and perhaps murder, until he should be strengthened by an accession of numbers. I even attributed the absence of his dog to this cause. The sagacity of these animals is so incredible, that I entertained no doubt of the possibility of his being dispatched to their place of meeting by his master, as a signal;—besides, Conrad's expression on our missing the dog, "*he is not idle!*" struck me very forcibly.

I was interrupted in these reflections by hearing some one tap gently at the door of the cottage. I turned my eyes on Bertrand, but without moving my head; he was fast asleep; fatigue had completely overpowered him. The knocking at the door was repeated, and a louder tap at the window, close to which Conrad lay asleep, aroused him. Conrad raised himself gently from the place where he lay, and looked round while he softly approached the door. At that moment, the sensations I experienced are not to be described;—to dart from my bed, grapple with Conrad before he reached the door, and tax him with his premeditated treachery—or coolly to take the pistol from under my pillow, and shoot him before he carried his villainous scheme into execution. These ideas rapidly crossed my mind. I lay still and motionless. I lost the power of volition.

Disgust

Disgust of the past, despair of the future—a calm and settled hatred of existence, which then unaccountably possessed me—the horrible scene of human misery which surrounded me—all gave me a loathsome feeling of indescribable apathy, which oppressed me. His hand was on the bolt, about to undraw it. This was the decisive moment.—I resolved to await the event.

Conrad opened the door, when in sprang—it was Wolf! The noise occasioned Bertrand to start from his sleep. "Who goes there?" cried he, "you are a dead man!"

"It is Wolf! it is Wolf!" cried the children, rising themselves up in their beds with joy.

Wolf now marched over to his master, and laid at his feet a large bundle, which he carried in his mouth. "It is my portmanteau and haver-"sack," cried Bertrand, frantic with

joy. " Hurrah! Hurrah!—get up, " my little ones—now ye shall eat as " much as ye list, if Wolf has left us " any supper."

The dog, it seems, had seen the portmanteau and haversack drop in the forest; the carriage of such a bundle in his mouth, sufficiently accounted for the time he took in following us.

Our fears were now converted into merriment. Bertrand did the honours, and in a few moments we had the contents of the haversack spread on the table, and found that honest Wolf had brought it untouched. A little warm wine poured into the mouth of the infant, restored it once more to existence—its eyes opened; its little hands expanded; its joints were loosened from the convulsive grasp of death;—the smile of returning life once more played round its mouth. The mother threw herself on her knees, and with uplifted

uplifted hands exclaimed, " Eternal " and allpowerful God! receive my " thanks! You have heard a mother's " prayer—you have not deserted our " humble roof in the day of our trou- " ble. Strangers, may that Provi- " dence who guided you here to save " us, never desert you. May he walk " with you through the thorny paths of " this life, and receive you into his " protection when you die the death " of the just!"

" Pray for me," said Conrad, " and " give thanks that I have been saved " from the commission of a great " crime!"

I beheld a tear roll down the scarred and rugged cheek of Conrad, while he beheld his little ones eating their supper. The moment they had allayed the pangs of hunger, they retired to rest.

" You know not, Sir," exclaimed

Conrad, turning towards me, "the "benefits you have conferred upon "me; but for you, I should be this "night a guilty wretch—a murderer!" I started. — "Yes," continued he, "want and actual famine have brought "me to this.... I was a private in "the regiment of Kozinsky. These "wounds you behold, I received in "the service of my country. I mar- "ried a young woman of Franconia, "who in her youth possessed charms, "which hardships and grief have ef- "faced. When we retired at the end "of a severe campaign into a garri- "son, my wife informed me that she "had been frequently insulted by our "commanding officer, who took ad- "vantage of my occasional absences "on duty, to make to her proposals "of the basest nature."

"'I have kept this a secret from "you,' said she, 'as long as I pos-

" sibly could endure it; but I fear his
" revenge will soon burst on either
" your head or mine, on account of
" the contempt which I do not hesitate
" to express for him.'

" This account rendered me very
" miserable. It was my turn to go
" on duty that night; I was not long
" on guard, before one of my com-
" rades, who suspected the designs
" of the Colonel, came to me and in-
" formed me that he saw the Colonel
" entering my lodgings, and heard him
" bursting open with his foot the door
" of my wife's apartment, which dur-
" ing my absence she carefully locked.
" 'For one moment, comrade,' said I,
" 'take my post.' I, delivered to
" him my musket, and ran frantic
" with rage to my lodging. I found
" the Colonel on the point of using
" force to my wife. When he heard
" me, he turned towards me with a

" face

" face pale as ashes. I attempted to
" expostulate—he rushed by me, and
" in a few minutes, a file of men
" came in and put me under arrest.
" I was tried and found guilty on the
" charge of deserting my post. I at-
" tempted to defend myself, by re-
" lating the base designs of the Co-
" lonel; they would not hear me—
" they gagged me and bound me. I
" was thrown into a dungeon, where
" I lay for some weeks; at the end of
" which time, they informed me that
" the Colonel had interfered to save
" my life. I was severely flogged,
" and dismissed the regiment. It is
" needless to relate, Sir, how long I
" wandered with my wife and chil-
" dren, from place to place, without
" employment, destitute of food, and
" with no other shelter than the open
" canopy of heaven. After years of
" suffering, chance conducted us here.

" In

" In these wilds, the savage wolf seem-
" ed the only inhabitant and master.
" I built this cottage; and with the
" aid of my dog and a gun, I pro-
" cured in the forest enough of game
" to support my family; and where-
" withal to sell in the neighbouring
" town, what purchased for them
" bread and necessaries. I had not
" been many months leading this kind
" of life, when the steward of the
" lord of the manor discovered me
" one morning coming forth from my
" hut. ' So,' said he, ' this is the
" way then that my Lord's property
" is wasted, by such intruders as you
" are.' I pleaded my utter ignorance
" of being an intruder on the rights
" of others. I was about to relate to
" him my distress; cold-hearted man,
" he turned from me without hearing
" the sad tale of our woes. Winter
" now set in. The source of our
" wretched

" wretched existence began to fail us;
" the severity of the weather has
" driven from these woods, the ani-
" mals which used to contribute to
" our support; they have sought a
" milder climate, and their suste-
" nance in those plains, from whence
" man has banished us. For behold!
" said Conrad (lifting up the large
" hairy cap which covered his brow,
" I beheld with horror, the word
" *death* in large letters, burned on his
" forehead), who will receive under
" his roof, the branded villain, the
" guilty one, the condemned? Yes,
" this eternal brand, this living monu-
" ment of my disgrace, teaches the
" innocent to hate the crime-polluted
" wretch, and tells man to fly from
" me. With the beasts I have made
" [illegible] habitation; it is they alone who
" [illegible]dare to approach my lonely dwell-
" ing; and whilst with dismal yells
" they

" they bay the moon, I walk forth and
" rejoice. I rail like them at nature
" and nature's works; with them I
" prowl, and my heart has become al-
" most as ferocious and savage as
" themselves. I was revolving within
" myself to what new wilderness I
" should fly to hide my woe; when a
" few mornings ago, the lord of the
" manor announced himself at our
" door. I looked up, and beheld the
" fatal author of all my misfortunes,
" yes, it was Colonel Wildebrand, the
" son of Prince de Zaremberg. Sor-
" row and fatigue had so altered me,
" he knew me not. He asked my
" name, I gave him the first that oc-
" curred to my recollection. He then
" drew me aside, using great pre-
" caution to prevent our being over-
" heard. 'You have,' said he, 'for
" some time trespassed on this pro-
" perty; have you a grant, a vassal's
" right?'

" right?'—' Neither one nor the other,'
" replied I fiercely.—' The law con-
" demns you to punishment for this,'
" observed he.—'Granted.'—He seem-
" ed pleased at my ferocity.—' There
" is a way by which you may con-
" tinue your possession here, or even
" do better.'—' Name it,' said I.—
" ' To one,' said he, ' of your manner
" of thinking (nodding significantly)
" few words are best. There is a ha-
" ted rival who now sleeps beneath
" our roof; I would have him sleep
" no more, do you understand me?'
" ' Most undoubtedly.'—' Dispatch
" him, and a rich reward shall be your's.'
" I counted the money already
" in my pocket. He gave me my
" directions. This very night I was
" to have reached the castle of Glatz.
" I looked with a heavy heart on
" my wife and children 'ere I left
" them, I read the truth too plainly

in

" in their hollow eyes; they were dy-
" ing of famine. For some days
" back, a few crusts of bread have
" been their only support.—' Father,
" father, give us bread,' they cried.
" I rushed out, exclaiming, ' Yes,
" my children, you shall have bread!'
" Here is the key which opens the
" door of a private passage, that tra-
" verses the towers of the castle; here
" is the dagger, which 'ere the clock
" struck one, would have been buried
" in the heart of the Count de Beau-
" marchais!"

" He stands before you," cried I;
" now, Conrad, strike!"

" Allpowerful Providence," exclaim-
ed Conrad throwing himself on his
knees, " preserver of my life—my fa-
" mily—my children also,—yes, yes,
" there is a God in heaven!"

The violence of Conrad's emotions at this discovery demonstrated the sincerity

sincerity of his repentance. I could not avoid shuddering at my marvellous escape, and I felt equally surprized and grateful for this wonderful proof of the supernatural power of my mysterious preserver. I endeavoured to relieve Conrad's mind from the weight of premeditated guilt, by demonstrating to him the wonderful ways of Providence, which ofttimes interposing between the virtuous mind and inevitable ruin, snatches it from guilt, and having passed it through the ordeal of temptation, renders it ever after able to withstand the powers of evil, stedfast in virtue, and worthy of its God. I succeeded at length in softening his misanthropic heart. I requested his assistance in procuring a conveyance from the neighbouring town, in case we found the horses incapable proceeding in the morning. To this he readily acceded.

We

We all retired to our beds once more, and endeavoured to pass in repose the few remaining hours of the night. 'Ere the dawning of morning Conrad had risen: and on our awaking, we found the remains of the last night's supper furnished us with a comfortable breakfast. The children with animated looks approached the table, and poor Wolf, to whom we were indebted for it, was not fogotten.—Conrad reported that the lameness of my horse was occasioned by a stone he had picked up, which was now removed, and they were both sufficiently able to pursue their journey.

Conrad now declared his intention to remove with his wife and children that morning from the forest. "The Colo-
" nel, Sir," said he, "will set no bounds
" to his vengeance, when he learns
" that his scheme of villainy has been
" frustrated. It is possible, also, that
" he

" he may be informed, that you, Sir,
" slept beneath this roof, and that I
" neglected this opportunity. In fine,
" he may acquire a knowledge of who
" I really am; I then can expect no
" mercy."

These considerations had struck me very forcibly before: and I had sketched a plan in my mind, for extricating Conrad from his unpleasant situation. I informed him, that if he felt desirous of trying his fortune in a foreign land, I had no objectiou to his accompanying me to the North of Europe, provided that he could establish his wife and children in some of the neighbouring towns, until he succeeded in obtaining employment. But I warned him not to imagine I could do more than recommend him, for I was a stranger myself: and like him, was about to seek the protection of a foreign land.

Conrad's gratitude was unbounded for

for this offer. He informed me that in the neighbouring town of B...., lived a rich widow, to whom he always sold his wild fowl; she was a very liberal woman, and had been for some time looking out for a person to assist her in the care of her establishment. He intended to propose his wife for that situation, as she was a capital accountant, and had received a tolerable education. The only favour he demanded of me, was to stop for four hours in this town, which lay in our way to Dresden; and in the mean time, he would remove his family, and prepare himself to accompany me. I gave him the direction to the inn where I intended to lodge; and I promised him that I should wait for him the time he requested. Before I departed, I called his wife aside, gave her some money, and informed her, if it ever lay in my power to do her a greater

greater service, that she might rely on my assistance.

The sun had now risen, but its beams shone dimly through the thick fog which concealed the heavens from our view. We mounted our horses, and left this poor family, with whom joy was now an inmate, where despair had been so long a tardy and unbidden guest. The children knelt with uplifted hands on the fresh fallen snow, while tears of gratitude rolled down their cheeks. The mother murmured her blessings in broken ejaculations, and the last sound we heard borne on the soft breeze of morning, "Blessings "on the head of him who gives help to "the afflicted!"

We arrived early in the morning at the town of B..... From this place I sent back the horses with a polite note to the Prince de Zaremberg, preserving a complete silence on the base and

cowardly

cowardly plot of his son, as I did not wish to add to the weighty griefs which already afflicted him.

Conrad appeared before the appointed time, in high spirits. On introducing his wife to the widow, as a person whom he had procured to fill the situation, which fortunately still remained vacant, they flew into one another's arms, with every token of mutual affection, and Conrad's surprise was not diminished when he was informed that each had found a sister. The widow had married and lost her husband long after Conrad's misfortunes commenced. She had never seen Conrad as her sister's husband, and her change of name had frustrated every attempt made by Conrad's wife to discover her. Conrad was delighted to leave his wife and family with this good woman. I was pleased to see that he had taken the precaution

to change his dress; as his former uncouth habiliments must have created some unpleasant suspicions in the inns we should be obliged to stop at on our route. With part of the money I had presented to his wife, he had purchased a decent dress. He still wore his formidable fur cap, but underneath it a black band tied round his forehead concealed the fatal inscription. He still retained his arms, as a safeguard on our journey, and no intreaties nor threats could separate the faithful Wolf from his master.

I now made preparations for pursuing our journey. On reaching the Elbe we were fortunate in immediately procuring a barge for performing our voyage down that river. The severity of the winter had abated, and Spring had already with light footsteps visited its banks, and scattered many an early blossom. While the snowy hills around,

swelled

swelled its waters with a thousand tributary streams.

While I prosecuted my journey towards Hamburgh, I met with many of my former friends, as unhappy as myself, among the French Hugonots, at that time wretched exiles from their country. They had performed a joyless pilgrimage from their once loved France; but, alas! without meeting with that sainted shrine where pity bestows an hallowed sanctuary. Strangers in these inhospitable climes, their misery had seldom been alleviated by the commiseration of the humane. Their grief had found no solace in the sympathy of a friend. The wreck of our native country, of that vessel of the state, once so gallant and trim, had covered with its wretched remains the shores of Europe. Humanity had heard, it is true, the cries of many unhappy sufferers, and the hand of com-

passion had been stretched forth to save them. But many of noble rank yet wandered miserable outcasts in a foreign land; and by a noble resignation to their fate, and a cheerful obedience to the will of heaven, sought for that refuge in God which man denied!

On arriving at Hamburgh, I found there was no vessel ready to sail for the Baltic. I judged it prudent to take a retired lodging in one of the suburbs; my landlord was a German Jew, and like all those of his faith, made me pay exorbitantly dear for the scanty accommodation his house afforded.

I had not many days acquired possession of my lodging, when my notice was attracted by a stranger who had taken possession of the house opposite to which I lodged, a few days after my arrival. His dress denoted a foreigner,

foreigner; his mien was mysterious; he watched all our actions, and whithersoever I went, he was sure to follow my footsteps. His figure was concealed by a large pelisse, which he folded round him, and his countenance was effectually shaded from our view by a large hat flapped over it. The blinds of his windows were constantly let down, while from behind them he seemed to scrutinize the interior of my apartment. The suspicions of Conrad were awakened, but to all the questions which he put he received none but mysterious answers. On relating to me his apprehensions, Conrad swore he would never desist, until he had developed the designs of the mysterious stranger. I felt a considerable degree of alarm respecting this man, for his figure, although evidently disguised, exactly resembled that of Rezzonico. I pressed Conrad to make en-

quiries on that evening for a vessel bound to Sweden. He saw the propriety of hastening our departure, and instantly went to the quay of Hamburgh to try and procure our passage.

The evening had nearly passed away, and Conrad had not returned; I became so uneasy at his absence, that I ordered Bertrand to arm himself and follow me. We soon reached the quay; on enquiring among the captains of the different vessels, I was informed that a person answering the description of Conrad had been there; but that on his return, they had heard a scuffle on the quays, between him and some strangers, with whom they had not interfered, as they imagined it to be some drunken quarrel. This account alarmed me. We proceeded along the water's edge; the moon was up; Bertrand perceived something dark floating on the surface of the river.

ver. It was approaching the shore on which we stood. The moonlight, and the reflection of the lights in the river, enabled us to examine it. It was the body of a man. "It is certainly poor "Conrad," exclaimed Bertrand, trembling with fear. "Examine it then," said I, "and endeavour to distinguish "its garments and features." As the swelling of the wave threw it nearer shore, we discovered with horror, that it was a headless corpse, and barbarously mangled!

We hastened from this dreadful scene, and with faultering steps approached our lodging. As I ascended the wretched staircase which led to our apartment, Wolf met me, and looked wistfully up in my face, as if to inquire whether I had found his master. Alas! I feared that Bertrand's surmise was too true, and that Conrad was no more. The disappearance of

this man not only caused me considerable regret on his own account, but it also excited very great apprehensions in my mind, regarding my personal safety. The relentless cruelty of this fell destroyer, who armed with the crucifix and the poignard, appealed to his meek Saviour, while he lapped up human blood, had been exhibited but too recently and clearly in the prison of my father, not to affect my feelings very powerfully. I was aware of the inexhaustible activity of Rezzonico's mind, and of his ability to surmount every obstacle which might oppose him in a favourite pursuit. I was convinced that Conrad was too prudent to become the partner or sufferer in a drunken quarrel. It was not unlikely that he had been waylaid by some of the emissaries of Rezzonico, or perhaps of Wildebrand, and as his enemy was mine also, it

was

was requisite that I should guard my safety by every precaution. I dispatched Bertrand to make further inquiries after Conrad, and to secure, if possible, a passage in the first vessel which sailed from Hamburgh. It was now very late; I rang the bell for supper. Bertrand had not returned, and the Jew came in with what had been prepared. I observed this man, while he spread my supper on the table, and poured out some Rhenish wine; his hand shook, and his frame was visibly agitated, while now and then I perceived a malignant smile cross his sallow features. I was extremely thirsty. I took up the goblet to drink; at that moment the door of the apartment shook, and a foot was heard on the stairs. Wolf, who lay on the hearth expecting his master, sprang across me, and shook the goblet from my hand. I had scarcely sipped the

wine. Bertrand entered, and the Jew disappeared. A momentary faintness came over me; my tongue felt dry and parched, and a flood of fire seemed to roll through my veins, and burn in my heart. I attempted to walk, my limbs tottered, a cold dew overspread me, my brain grew dizzy, and the room, the lights, and Bertrand, seemed to whirl round me. A horrid thought assailed me. "I am poisoned! the "wine! the wine!" I exclaimed, "help! help!"

Bertrand assisted me to a bed, and instantly flew for a physician, who administered the usual remedies. He was of opinion that I had swallowed a small quantity of a very subtle poison. After I had explained to him my suspicions of mine host, he examined the wine, and was convinced, on analyzing it, that it contained poison of a most potent nature. The

shock

shock which my constitution received from the Jew's deadly potion, was too violent to be rapidly repaired. I lay for twenty weeks in a state of indescribable torture; my mind at times touched the extremes of utter darkness and oblivion, and of the wildest impulses of the most ungovernable insanity.

The humane physician had reported the affair to the council, and when I was sufficiently recovered, I delivered to the public authorities, a statement on oath of these facts. Orders had been issued to their emissaries to apprehend the Jew, and a reward was offered for the discovery of Conrad, who, on account of his sudden disappearance on the critical night, had become an object of suspicion to the council. Yet I cannot suspect such depravity to exist in the human heart, as to suppose him capable of attempt-

ing the life of one, who saved him and his family from all the horrors of famine. However, from that time, I never could unravel the mystery of Conrad's fate. The Jew, no doubt, had fled, and received the reward of his villainy, for all the attempts made by the authorities of Hamburgh to discover him proved ineffectual.

On my recovery I found a vessel ready to sail to Sweden. We hastened to embark, and the winds of autumn blew propitious for our voyage. We landed in this country, after a quick and favourable passage, and I made immediate preparations for my journey to the capital. Nothing worthy of relation occurred on our way to Hafna; at that place, the horses which were procured for us by the postmaster were so high in mettle, as to prove nearly ungovernable. Towards the conclusion of our journey I was obliged

to

to take the reins. We travelled without any accident until we arrived at the top of one of the precipices which hangs over the lake before us. The road, as you know, winds close to its edge on one side, while an impenetrable forest skirts it on the other. We had nearly passed half way, when we heard the clattering of horses' hoofs behind the carriage. Some fire-arms were discharged, and several men suddenly emerged from the forest, crossed the road in front, and presented their harquebusses. The moon gleamed on their bright armour, and by its light I perceived that a large white cross was represented on their mantles.

"Ha!" cried Ulrica, "*the White Cross Knights!*"

"The horses," continued Adolphus, at that moment took fright, and dragged the carriage towards the precipice.

The

The sight fled from my eyes—I lost the power of sense or motion—until Providence directed your son to the spot, and your humanity and attention awakened me here to new life and eternal gratitude!

A long pause ensued when the Count had ended his narration. Different emotions seemed pictured on the countenances of his auditors. Axel Olof's brow was bent in horror and amazement, and he reflected with terror, that Adolphus was persecuted by the White Cross Knights! Laurentius felt the sincerest pity and compassion for Adolphus; and his soul was so void of bigotry, and so filled with benevolence, that his looks expressed his horror at those excesses which Adolphus had attributed to his brethren. The old Ulrica's eyes were suffused with tears, and Christina, fas-

cinated

cinated with his marvellous story, gazed like an enthusiastic recluse, with fear and with love, on the image of her idolatry. The exclamation of Ulrica conveyed to Adolphus the idea, that from these peasants he might acquire some information concerning those White Cross Knights, who appeared to be his terrible enemies; but on this subject they did not dare to talk. An emotion of dread and terror seemed connected with it, and visibly operated on the minds of all, when Adolphus alluded to it. He could gather no information from their obscure hints,—but that they were terrible beings—mysterious and all powerful—who formed an extended, but invisible brotherhood—which had shook the kingdom from one extremity to the other, filled all men's minds with fear, and caused the monarch to tremble

on

on his throne—who were subject neither to defeat nor disaster—who were expected and dreaded in all times and seasons—and yet of their abode no man could tell—they were nowhere to be found!

CHAP. III.

——————————For he,
With many fair and princely qualities
That in his clear morn no attention drew,
Now, on the brow of dark adversity,
Hangs like a rainbow on a sully cloud,
And all men look at him.

MISS BAILLIE'S *Constantine Paleologus.*

GASPARD de Montbazon was descended from one of the most ancient families in the north of Europe; a family which was distinguished among that illustrious order of nobles, the Counts of Sweden. The name of this family, however, whether it arose from fear or shame, Montbazon was never heard to repeat. Entitled by his birth to the splendid estate and dignified title

of his ancestors, a concurrence of unheard of circumstances had deprived him, shortly after the age of maturity, of all the privileges of his birth-right, and forced him even to fly from his native land covered with disgrace, and with all the hopes and expectations of sanguine youth blighted in the very bud of promise. A period of several years now elapsed; during which Montbazon had eluded all the inquiries of his friends, and the rigorous search of his enemies. Thrown at length, in times of trouble and bloodshed, upon the theatre of affairs in Europe; he appeared under the name of Gaspard de Montbazon, in the humble capacity of a lieutenant in the army of Francis the Ist, King of France. This lieutenant, however, soon caused the eyes of his gallant companions in arms to be fixed upon him in wonder and admiration. A

gigantic stature, together with an air and movement almost supernatural, and a courage and resolution carried to the utmost pitch of human daring, were qualities which rendered him soon distinguished in those fields, which in that age were often won, by the spirited example and personal prowess of an individual alone.

Promotions, distinction, and honourable rewards, now attended the career of Montbazon: but it appeared like a caprice of fortune in raising him thus high; for his elevation rendered his fall more desperate, and his ruin more inevitable and compleat. He had now touched one of the enviable goals of human felicity. His rank in the army was elevated, his courage and integrity indisputable, his friends numerous. A favourite of the King, and adored by the country he had adopted, there seemed to be

nothing

nothing wanting to his happiness but to secure its stability. A remarkable event threw him at once from the height to which he had been elevated, and it proved that misfortune was not yet weary of pursuing him.

Neither defeat, captivity, nor the number of his enemies were capable of daunting the brave heart of Francis; he, at this time, had taken the field against the Emperor, who had passed the Var with his forces and ravaged Provence. Francis, who had learned prudence from defeat, was satisfied with intercepting their supplies of provisions and forage; and he encamped with the flower of his nobility, and attended by the whole splendour of the Court of France, at Valence, where he determined to hazard a general engagement, in case the enemy, by the defeat of Montmorency, who lay nearer the frontiers, should

should be enabled to penetrate into the heart of the kingdom.

Montbazon had been promoted to the rank of aide-de-camp to the King, and he now attended on the royal person. The army having taken their position at Valence, the royal tents were stretched along the banks of the Rhone. It came to Montbazon's turn one evening to keep watch in the royal tent; the King, who had undergone a great deal of fatigue in the early part of the day, had retired for some hours into the inner apartment of the tent, which a slight curtain divided from that in which Mountbazon kept watch. Four of the King's guards walked their rounds at the entrance, while Montbazon paced the interior of the tent impatiently and anxiously; for it was long since past the hour at which the King usually went forth. At length, fearing that

the

the King might have become suddenly indisposed, he drew aside the hangings gently, and beheld the King reclining backwards on the couch on which he had been sitting, while his feet rested on the rail of a table, which stood before him. The King was, to all appearance, in a sound sleep. The evening was hot and sultry, and part of the outside hangings of the tent had been opened near the couch where he sat, in order to admit light and air. The table before the King was covered with rouleaus of gold coin, which he had been counting before fatigue and the heat overcame him. Montbazon advanced on tiptoe; he feared to make the least noise, dreading lest the King should awake. Montbazon was in the act of drawing the crimson hangings of the aperture, in order that the King might not be suddenly chilled by the damp evening air, when the King sud-

denly

denly awoke. Montbazon, whose eye at that moment was attracted for the first time by the gold which glittered on the table, felt confused when he perceived that the King watched this involuntary motion of his eyes. Montbazon now collected his presence of mind, apologized to the king for his intrusion, and was about to withdraw, when the King stopped him, and in a cold manner desiring him to inform him when the chiefs, who were about to deliberate in council concerning a movement of the enemy, had assembled in the royal tent, dismissed him, and proceeded with great earnestness of manner to count his rouleaus.

When the commanders, who began to arrive shortly after, were assembled, Montbazon proceeded to inform his Majesty. The King looked at him sharply, and demanded, in a severe tone of voice, if he had permitted any

one

one to pass into the royal tent, or whether he had been a moment absent from his duty. Montbazon replied to these questions in the negative. "Look "to yourself," then replied the King sharply in passing him, "for I have "missed one of my rouleaus!"

Before Montbazon had time to answer his majesty, the King passed on, and laid the whole affair before the chief nobles of his kingdom and the commanders of his army, who were waiting for his majesty to commence the deliberations of the council. The King did not attempt to throw his suspicions on any particular person, or seem to intimate so serious a charge against the honour of Montbazon's character; but he jocularly observed, that every one, from his royal person down to the meanest sentinel of the watch, must submit to be searched, or suffer the imputation of having committed

committed the theft. In spite of the expressions of his majesty, the eyes of the whole assembly were directed on Montbazon, who suffered the severest torments of mind; while the varying emotions of wounded honour, pride, resentment, shame, and scorn, dilated his majestic form with an extraordinary expression, and shewed the inward swellings of a lofty soul. The sentinels were now called in, and his majesty very condescendingly was the first to exhibit the inside of the pockets of his doublet. The assembly had now all submitted to the search, including Montbazon, and the rouleau was not discovered.

Some one cried out, "there is a "helmet in the corner of the tent "which has not been searched." The helmet was brought forward, and to their great astonishment, the rouleau was discovered envelopped in the li-

ning. Every one now demanded the owner of the helmet with the white plumes; and covered with shame, despair, and confusion, the owner stood forth in the midst of them. It was the unfortunate Montbazon!

The King, at this moment of the discovery of the supposed guilt of Montbazon, observed a very old courtier fixing his eyes on the delinquent, and then smiling with a very remarkable expression. The smile did not escape the quick observation of the monarch, and he resolved to inquire the meaning of it the moment he had an opportunity of speaking alone with the courtier.

"May it please your majesty," cried Montbazon, advancing to the King and kneeling at his feet, while he drew his sword from his scabbard and presented it to him, "to do an "act of speedy justice,—pierce my "faithful

" faithful heart, (which has never
" swerved from the duty it owes to your
" majesty and to the laws of honour,)
" with this sword, which in the hour
" of my glory you presented to me
" on the field of battle. If I have
" committed this base deed, I deserve
" death,—yet innocent as I am, to be
" suspected of it and yet live, is pu-
" nishment too great for one who has
" acquired fame in arms and ho-
" nourable applause in the paths of
" glory."

The King was affected at this appeal, but displeasure appeared again to predominate in his countenance. He was grieved to think that the brightest ornament of chivalry, the bravest of his warriors, should thus have sullied his spotless fame. He ordered Montbazon to rise, and after denouncing the severest punishment on the criminal, he commanded him

to be conveyed forthwith to the dungeons of a round tower, which defended one of the approaches of Valence.

Montbazon was led by his guard through the various divisions of the camp, despoiled of his military garniture, and with his arms tied behind him like a common felon. At first the soldiers murmured, and a tumult ran through their ranks. Their compassion was excited at witnessing the disgrace of a commander who had so often led them on to victory; but their ranks became still, and the murmur died away when they perceived the downcast mien of Montbazon, whose eyes were bent upon the earth, and whose dejected visage flushed with shame, seemed to avoid and to fear the bold scrutiny of his fellow soldiers.

Montbazon was thrown into one of the

the darkest dungeons of the tower; his limbs were loaded with chains, and some sorry food was left for his subsistence. On his remonstrating with the officer who commanded in the fortress on his harsh treatment, he was informed that such were the orders of the King. Montbazon sunk into a fit of gloomy abstraction. He attempted to review the events of the evening and to discover the author of the infamous conspiracy, of which he had fallen the victim, but his mind was incapable of this effort. The entire force of his understanding seemed to be filled and occupied by one dark and sombre image. It was the moment of his disgrace, that unfortunate crisis, when in the presence of the most brilliant court in the world, he had been proclaimed by his sovereign a base felon, a wretch who, abusing the trust and honour of his office, takes advantage

of his situation, to purloin the treasure of his liege lord and master. A tap at the door of his dungeon roused Montbazon from his reverie; he gathered up his chains and advanced with an undaunted air, to meet the messenger of justice. The door flew open, and a dark figure muffled up in the folds of a watch cloak advanced towards him. When Montbazon observed the light of the moon (which gleamed mistily athwart the bars of his dungeon) fall on the face of the stranger, he started back with surprise, for he beheld the King! In accents of the deepest sorrow and compassion the King lamented the fall of his favourite.

As soon as Montbazon had recovered from the surprise which the sudden appearance of the King had thrown him into; he asserted his innocence to his majesty in the strongest terms, notwithstanding the unfortunate appear-

ances

ances against him, which seemed to favour so strongly the presumption of his guilt.

" Who and what are you?" demanded the King, " can you call " forth the testimony of friends, rela- " tions, or country, in your favour?"

Montbazon remained silent. " Can " you explain," said the King, in a severer tone, " what were those cir- " cumstances which caused you to " assume a mean disguise, five years " ago, in the city of Dantzig?"

The old courtier whose smile testified that he felt no great surprise at witnessing the supposed fraud of Montbazon, had imparted to his majesty the very equivocal circumstances under which he had seen him in the north of Europe, when Montbazon was forced to fly from his country.

" Montbazon uttered no reply to this question, but still asserted that some

enemy, who had conspired for his destruction, must have taken this method to destroy his fair fame for ever. If the King had only entertained doubts before, he was now firmly impressed with the guilt of Montbazon. His refusal to give any clue to his family, or to throw any light on the mystery of his past life, were presumptions so strong, that they amounted to proofs of bad conduct in the mind of the King.

" I come not here," exclaimed the King with severity, " to parley with " the guilty—nor yet to visit you with " that punishment which the atrocity " of your crime deserves, and which " its publicity demands as an exam- " ple. The rigid observance of our " law, which the severe discipline of " a camp requires, rendered it impos- " sible for me to express, or to exer- " cise those feelings of compassion,

" which

" which were overflowing in my heart
" at the moment of your disgrace. I
" free you from your chains. Throw
" off your garments; take this cloak,
" it will completely envelope your
" person, and give you safe conduct
" through the camp; for you observe,"
said the King, shewing a lily which was embroidered in diamonds on the front of his cloak, " at this sign
" they will imagine they recognize
" the King. Take this purse of gold;
" nay," added the King, on observing the resistance which Montbazon meditated—" if you disobey me, even
" in the least of these particulars, your
" head shall be visited with the ut-
" most severity of the law. Observe
" my directions: you will turn to the
" right on leaving the tower; you
" will there be questioned only by
" one sentinel. Leave the neighbour-
" hood of Valence quickly—for if you

" approach within five leagues of my " person, I will have you hanged " on the nearest tree. Pass into other " kingdoms, seek other climes. Let " me never see your face again. Re- " member the pass of the night; the " word is St. Francis."

Montbazon, who would have endured a thousand deaths, rather than be indebted for his safety to a sovereign, who held him in so contemptible a light as thus to degrade him with the most infamous of mankind, was forced to desist from an unavailing resistance. He was aware, from his knowledge of the King's temper, that all remonstrance would be unavailing; and he thus avoided the dishonour of a disgraceful death—the death of a felon, by yielding obedience to the commands of the King. Francis instantly freed him from his chains, and Montbazon wrapped round him the King's mantle

and

and was about to leave the prison, when Francis called him back.

" There remains one thing more to " be performed 'ere we part," said the King; " the lieutenant of the tow- " er and the sentinels of the watch " will come to visit you at the ap- " pointed hour, and bring you food, " according to my orders; they will " find me here, armed and yet a pri- " soner. I would not that they should " suspect me of this weakness of " heart, or accuse me of contaminat- " ing myself with guilt. This must " appear your act. Here is my sword; " take up the chains from which I " freed you, and fasten them on this " arm, which I have placed against " the staple."

" Pardon me, my liege," cried " Montbazon, kneeling, " and do not " force me to commit this act of sui- " cide against mine own honour. If

" I rob my Sovereign of his valuable
" cloak, his sword, and chain him to
" the walls of my dungeon, the world
" will have scope to tax me with more
" than imaginary crime. My honour,
" my character"....

" Is wounded already to the quick," replied the King promptly, " 'tis lost
" past redemption. I will hear no
" more—obey me quickly, or trem-
" ble."

Montbazon was obliged to perform this hard task; he fastened the King's arm to the staple, and girt the Monarch's sword round his waist. When he beheld his defenceless Monarch in his power, and glanced his eye upon that sword, with which he might instantly dispatch him, and thus revenge his wrongs, his breast swelled with the noble reflection, that the King, in thus magnanimously exposing himself, could not have believed his soul so

steeped

steeped in crime, as not to hold inviolate the sacred laws of honour. Consoled with this tribute paid to his past glory, and penetrated to the heart, he threw himself before the King, and kissed his feet; but the King spurned him from him, and with a haughty look, bade him begone.

Montbazon instantly rose and left the prison in gloomy silence, while the King remained in his place for three hours, at which time he was released by the watch who came to visit Montbazon. Francis, who deemed that this time was sufficient to allow his former favourite to escape from the vicinity of the camp, gave strict orders that he should be pursued by divisions of his troops in every direction, as far as they could emerge with safety from under the walls of Valence. Among the numerous friends which Montbazon possessed in the army of Francis

at

at that juncture, there was none who regretted his fate with greater sincerity than the Count de Beaumarchais. He was even possessed with a strong belief of his innocence of so many base crimes at the time; and long after the death of Francis, and at a period when most of the actors in that brilliant scene had sunk unheeded to the grave, and when the events which gave rise to so momentous a change in the destiny of Montbazon had passed away, and were swept into oblivion, he became possessed of the very proof which would have established his innocence, in a very remarkable manner.

In one of the battles between the Catholics and the Hugonots, a soldier belonging to the former had been taken prisoner by the division under the command of the Count de Beaumarchais. He was wounded in so very severe a manner, that the surgeon, before

before he performed the operation of amputation, recommended him to send for a confessor, and prepare himself for the very worst that might happen, as it was very unlikely that he would be able to survive the operation. The soldier, who exhibited strong signs of mental distress, implored the surgeon in the most urgent terms to be permitted an interview with the Count de Beaumarchais, to whom he had an important communication to make. The Count readily attended the summons of the dying soldier, who penetrated with grief and remorse, confessed to him, (after having called to his recollection the disgrace of Montbazon) that he was the man who stole the rouleau of gold from the King's table. He was one of the four guards of the royal tent: in passing the side where the King lay exposed, he beheld

held his Majesty fast asleep, and the gold spread upon the table. He could not resist the temptation. On being summoned into the King's presence, his mind misgave him, and he pulled the rouleau privately from his bosom, and threw it into the helmet which lay in the corner of the tent. He declared that he had no enmity against Montbazon; it was chance directed his hand, and he was perfectly ignorant who was the owner of the helmet in which he had deposited the rouleau. After making this confession, the operation was performed, and the soldier died immediately after in great torments. The Count de Beaumarchais made a deposition of this transaction, but it came too late—it could not reverse the sentence and opinion of the dead: and among the living, the prowess of Montbazon's all-powerful

arm

arm had exacted a respect, which the shade thrown on the early part of his life scarcely tarnished.

But to return from this digression. On emerging from the dungeon, Montbazon passed the skirts of the camp in safety. He took a road which led him to a distant part of France. He lived for many years in obscurity and oblivion; and repaid the neglect and contempt of the world with the bitter scorn of a rejected, yet innocent man. He flew to the only consolation which remained for a wounded spirit—the study of literature and philosophy.

The philosophy of that age was strongly tinctured with the belief of the marvellous doctrine of the Cabala; and the pursuit of that *ignis fatuus* of the mind, the philosopher's stone, was an object of invaluable attraction in the opinion of some of the most enlightened philosophers of the day. The

puerile

puerile superstition which characterized the Roman people in the most important affairs of state, descended to their posterity; but it was modified and changed in the course of ages, according with and accompanying the progress of the human mind. It was now tranferred from the observation of the objects of earth to those of heaven, and the study of mystic astrology became an object of importance, not only to those who would wish to tread the path of riches, prosperity, and glory, but also to the statesman who was desirous of wielding the energies of a kingdom with vigour and effect.

In the pursuit of the *elixir vitæ* and inexhaustible riches, Montbazon had made many important chemical discoveries, which although they did not absolutely yield to him the fruit of the land of promise, yet they gratified his taste for the marvellous, and excited

cited his mind to fresh and more vigorous exertions in these visionary studies.

In that part of France which he had chosen for his retirement, he lived unnoticed and unhonoured for his scientific attainments; few were willing to make advances of friendship towards a stranger, who appeared to court the depths of privacy and obscure poverty; and Montbazon despised the friendship of a world that would hold him cheap in its estimation, if acquainted with that which the malignity of his fate had doomed him to suffer. His sedentary avocations were pursued with an intenseness, which admitted of no relaxation, except in the occasional visits which he secretly paid to his friend the Count de Beaumarchais.

The gloomy aspect with which the government of France, about this

time

time regarded its subjects who were of the reformed religion, induced Montbazon, who was a Lutheran, to think of changing the place of his retirement. He was surrounded by Monks, who watched like spies his movements, and held all his actions in suspicion; they even stirred up the villagers to hold his person in abhorrence; and their fears of his having a communication with the devil, were considerably excited by the sallowness of his visage, and the superior length and blackness of his beard.

The protestant leaders at length conferred together, on the measures it became them to adopt. Montbazon was returning late in the evening from one of their secret councils, which was held at the castle of St. Blois, the seat of the Count de Beaumarchais; while he rode quietly through the silent vale of Chatigny, absorbed in deep musings,

musings, he perceived suddenly dark thunder clouds beginning to gather around him; he spurred on his steed, and gallopped in quest of shelter. While he rode through the wood, his ear was pierced by a shriek so clear and shrill, as to convince him it proceeded from some one in the last extremity of distress, and that the sufferer was a female. He instantly rode to that part of the wood from whence the sound proceeded; after straying for some minutes through its dark glens, his eye was attracted by a light which twinkled from an excavation made in the side of one of the hills, which rose above the wooded vale; he dismounted from his steed, tied it to a tree, and instantly approached the cave from whence the shrieks issued more fearfully than ever. The door of the cave was closed, but through an aperture, Montbazon beheld an old

Anchorite

Anchorite attempting to force into a compliance with his wishes, a young girl, whose beauty, extreme youth, innocence and tears, interested him instantly and powerfully in her favour. The Hermit desisted for a few moments from his attempt, and while she knelt on the bare earth wiping away her tears with her long tresses, which hung dishevelled on her bosom, he seemed to hesitate, and at length exclaimed, "Obstinate wretch! why "should you hesitate to obey me, "who saved your life at the risk of my "own!" The stifled sighs, and scarcely repressed shrieks of Edda, which was the name of this young creature, now excited his rage. "Why should I "hesitate to execute this rebel to my "will? Prepare!" cried he, in a terrible voice, "Prepare! for this instant "thou shalt surely die!"

The Hermit drew forth a long clasp-knife

clasp-knife from his under garment, and was about to execute his purpose; when Montbazon, who saw that no time was to be lost, instantly dashed the bolted door into pieces, and seized the arm of the decrepid Hermit.

Edda flew on the appearance of a stranger to a remote corner of the cell, and offered up prayers for the success of her preserver.

The Hermit struggled violently with Montbazon, and wounded him with the knife which he still held. Montbazon, who scorned to draw his sword on his feeble adversary, felled him with a blow to the earth, placed his knee on his bosom, and held him by the throat to prevent him crying for assistance; while he besought Edda to hand him the rope with which the Monk tied his garments, in order to secure his arms. While Edda obeyed him with fear and apprehension, Mont-

bazon

bazon seized the rope, and relaxed his grasp of the Monk. The whiteness of the Hermit's countenance now vied with the silver hair on his forehead. Montbazon hastily lowered the chain of the dim watch-light, and when the lamp shone on the Monk's pallid visage, he felt convinced that the Hermit was dead. The miserable and infirm old Anchorite was strangled in the pressure of Montbazon's fingers.

Montbazon buried his body on the same night, outside the cave; he next demanded of Edda who she was, and how she had fallen into the power of the monster he had destroyed.

Edda was too young to be able to give him much information. She had been brought to the Hermit about five years before, by another Hermit, who was a great deal more wicked than the last. He gave her sweetmeats to induce her to go along with him; but she

she had cried all the way, for she was sorry to leave her mother. This bad hermit ordered the hermit Paul to kill her, which Paul promised to do; but when the bad hermit went his way, Paul took compassion on her, and promised to let her live, provided she would not run away. She promised to obey Paul; for of what use would it have been forher to haveru ı a w ay into the wild wood, where she must have perished with hunger, or have been devoured by wild beasts? On every seventh day, when the country-people came with their offerings, Paul locked her up in a remote part of the cell under-ground; from whence she could not make herself heard by the peasants, if she wished. Paul had always behaved kindly to her until that evening, when he had become wicked like the bad hermit, and would no

 doubt

doubt have destroyed her; only that she was saved by her good hermit, for so she called Montbazon.

In this childish account, which Edda gave him, Montbazon could discern the outline of a horrid plan of monkish cruelty. That this child was intended as a sacrifice, on account of her religion, or her wealth, he had not a doubt; and he determined to save her from her persecutors, let the risk be what it might. Montbazon, on being informed that the peasants were not expected to visit the cave for some days, remained there, and deliberated what he should do with the child. He inspected the cave, and accurately examined the manuscripts of the deceased; which chiefly consisted of extracts from the pious mummeries of Jacobus de Voragine, as exhibited in his *Legenda Aurea*. He shook the leaves of his books, illuminated missals,

vals, and lives of saints without end; but without being able to find the object of his search,—some document of the birth and parentage of the child, for whom he felt himself so highly interested.

Montbazon finally resolved on conducting Edda as his own child, to his obscure residence. He engaged masters to attend her in all the branches of a polished education; and in the intervals of his severer studies and employments, he inducted her into a knowledge of the learned languages.

Montbazon's attention to his studies, and to his fair pupil; was interrupted for several years during the first wars of the Hugonots. His restless spirit had foreseen and prepared a resistance to the intolerable persecutions of the court. Acute in the council; irresistible in the field; his was the form of fire, which moved before them in

their night of peril, and which pointed to that land of promise, that would eventually reward their exertions. During the various fortunes of the war, Edda remained in one of those towns which espoused the cause of the Hugonots; and while her prayers and intercessions were sent forth for him, whom she regarded as her more than father, the deepness of her solitude was adorned and enlightened by those various studies and accomplishments, in which she so eminently excelled.

It is not deemed necessary to describe here those various periods of suffering, which fell to the lot of either party in this sanguinary and unnatural contest. The peace, which seemed to put an end to the calamities of this civil war, did not give confidence or repose to the mind of Montbazon. He remonstrated with his friends, and endeavoured

endeavoured to save them from the perils which lay in wait for them; but the fate of Cassandra was his, and lamenting their obduracy, and denouncing their fate, he disappeared suddenly from the midst of them,; while accompanied by Edda, he sought for safety and concealment in the cave of the vale of Chatigny. His retreat was unknown to all, except the Count de Beaumarchais; who unfortunately perished, owing to the incredulity with which he received the warnings of Montbazon. The cave proved a secure retreat after the death of the Hermit, as superstitious fear kept the peasants from approaching it.

While Montbazon remained here, he accidentally discovered in one of the subterraneous apartments of the cave, an iron box, containing some papers. On perusing them, he found them to consist chiefly of directions to

the hermit Paul, for practising the pious frauds which drew crowds from the neighbouring villages, to behold the miracles of the hermit, whose reputation for sanctity was so great, as to prove a source of revenue, which was not despised by the poor brothers of the neighbouring monastery of St. Francis. Several of these letters were signed by a name which arrested the attention of Montbazon. He had known this person for many years to be one of those deep-designing visionaries, who were capable of prostituting even the name of the Holy One, in the accomplishment of the basest purposes. Rezzonico was an Italian by birth, and to the natural talent which the Italians in general possess for intrigue, he added the deepest hypocrisy of which a human being is capable. Montbazon was long acquainted with the irreconcilable enmity he

vowed

vowed to their sect; and he felt no additional surprise, when, through these papers, he became acquainted with the various plans for exterminating the heretics *en masse*, or *en détail*, which were in progress, preparing, or impending on the heads of his friends, through the ministry of this arch political and sanguinary hypocrite. In one of these letters there was a reference made to the child which had been sent to Paul. The words were dark and mysterious, and Montbazon could gather very little meaning from them. This sentence, "*the child is* "*now some years dead, and yet the mo-* "*nastery has not benefited by that event;* "*however, wait a few years, and then,*" seemed very obscure to him, and yet it almost proved his suspicions to be just. Another passage caught his attention. "*One blow has already fallen* "*on De Beaumarchais—let him trem-*

" *ble, for another evil day approach-*
" *eth!*" Montbazon found it extremely difficult to reconcile this passage with what he knew of the life of the Count. At the period when this letter was written, the Count had suffered no misfortune, unless his separation from the Countess might be considered one; that, however, to Montbazon's mind, did not appear to be an evil hour, which separated him from a cold, heartless, and superstitious woman. A thought suddenly struck him, which promised to develop the mystery. From the circumstance of the child and the Count de Beaumarchais being mentioned in the same letter, he drew this inference, that the sentences were necessarily connected together in their meaning: it seemed then to follow that Edda, his *protégé*, was a daughter, or some very near relation of the Count's.

Count's. She might be a natural child of the Count; but on these points Montbazon could not decide, as since his friend's separation from the Countess, he had been extremely reserved on the subject of his family. Montbazon instantly flew to the château of St. Blois, to obtain an explanation on this subject from the Count. The Count had unfortunately, about this time, quitted St. Blois for Paris; an event which led to his melancholy catastrophe, and Montbazon never beheld him more. From all the inquiries which he deemed it compatible with his safety to make in the neighbourhood, he derived but little information; and the Countess was too closely surrounded with her friends of the catholic party, and too carefully watched by the fraternity of St. Francis, to admit of his applying to her. Upon these slight grounds, Montbazon

concluded that Adolphus and Edda were brother and sister; and yet when he carefully examined their features, he could not trace the slightest resemblance between them. They were both beautiful; but so totally dissimilar were they in the expression of countenance, that a contradiction to the theory of Montbazon seemed to be written on the forehead of each. He could not, however, resolve to give up an opinion which brought with it the consolation of his having saved the life and proved the guardian of the daughter of his best beloved friend. This was the cause of the extraordinary conduct he shewed towards Adolphus from the moment that he dreaded the consequences of their mutual attachment: and yet he felt so warm and so paternal an attachment for Edda, that he could not bring himself to communicate his suspicions to Adolphus; for

he

he dreaded his asserting the right, which in that case he would undoubtedly possess, of declaring himself her natural protector.

After the destruction or dispersion of the Hugonots, in consequence of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, Montbazon resolved on quitting France for ever: and he fortunately made good his escape into Germany, with Edda, only a short time before Adolphus took the same route. He accepted of an invitation which was given him by the Prince de Zaremberg, who had been an active friend to the Hugonot cause, and who felt delighted at having an opportunity of demonstrating his attachment to their intrepid leader. The splendid alliance which was here rejected by Edda, proved at first a matter of regret to Montbazon: but consequent events proved how much she had to congra-

tulate herself in forming so just an estimate of the character of Wildebrand.

To him who has been tossed about on the tide of fortune, amid the vicissitudes of defeat and victory, and whose serener hours have been passed in the struggles of a mind, which has become darkened and soured by calumny, a state of complete and undisturbed repose is irksome and fatiguing to the soul. It was thus with Montbazon; and, although his veins were no longer filled with the fire of youth, yet he panted after new toils, was desirous of fresh laurels, and roamed on the wings of imagination round all the corners of the earth in search of deeds of daring: an exercise, which inflamed but could not satiate the ardour of his mind. To succour the distrest, to defend the innocent, to set free the captive, to oppose the

arm

arm of tyranny, to stem the tide of religious persecution; such were the subjects of his daily meditations; and he even dreamed of securing the repose of the world by his gigantic schemes, and of giving the boon of perfect freedom to all mankind.

Montbazon was awakened from his vision of Utopian happiness, by the arrival of one of his countrymen at the castle of Glatz. He was deputed to engage the co-operation of Montbazon in the execution of a most extraordinary project; which about that time engaged the attention of some of the subjects of the Swedish crown, not more distinguished for their noble birth, than for their extraordinary talents and penetration. The name by which the Swede chose to announce himself, was Baron Brunof. Close and reserved in thought, while his manner and action seemed the result

of

of the warm enthusiasm, or unguarded impetuosity of the moment; he was eminently calculated to succeed in the task he had undertaken to perform. It was an object of considerable importance, for Brunof and his coadjutors to obtain the aid of a man, whose fame and prowess had been reported, and perhaps exaggerated in its passage to their frozen clime. He explained himself with the utmost caution to Montbazon, who, however, instantly accepted the proposal with the utmost ardour; and with the more willingness, as it promised him an opportunity of signal retaliation against the author of his earliest misfortunes. Brunof, who had been invested by his associates with full powers, gave him the necessary information for recognizing their friends in Sweden; and having now executed his commission, he prepared

prepared to return to the north of Europe.

Wildebrand had been deprived of his regiment for a misdemeanor, and he proposed accompanying Brunof, who did not hesitate in accepting him as a companion; and in the course of their journey, made him a confident in the arduous plan they had in contemplation. Shortly after their departure, Montbazon and Edda took leave of the aged Prince de Zaremberg, and quitted the castle of Glatz. During the entire course of their long journey, Montbazon's mind was pursuing a train of thought, which was seldom disturbed by any impressions excited by surrounding objects. Edda regarded him with an affection so filial, that she was disposed to acquiesce willingly in whatever plan he proposed. The inquiries she had made concerning their ultimate destination, Montbazon

bazon had either evaded, or answered with unusual mystery of manner; and it was not until after their arrival in Sweden that he became more communicative.

Edda had now an opportunity of enjoying all the romantic beauties of the Swedish landscape. The road hung over the bed of a river, whose sea-green waters foamed against the rocky sides of the cliffs, which impeded their course; or thundered down the precipitous falls, in one sea of foam. Their way now grew more rugged and steep; in some places the soil had been entirely worn away, and the road was formed of the face of the naked rock, whose polish rendered it at times difficult for the horses to keep their feet. Edda was absorbed in the contemplation of such a stupendous combination of the works of nature, as then presented themselves

selves to her view. Yet it was a pleasure not unmixed with pain, for she shrunk when the wheels of the carriage seemed to touch the edge of the precipice, which nodded from its base, and almost approached the cliffs which leaned with a similar inclination from the other side.

Montbazon was intent in the discovery of some object, for which he anxiously watched for some time, looking earnestly in one direction.

Edna gazed with unmixed delight at the immense column of spray, which hung like a dense cloud over the cataracts. The sun, which was then dipping into the waters of a distant lake, darted his rays athwart this mass of vapour, tinged it with innumerable prismatic colours, and gave to it the appearance of a dazzling meteor, descending on the surface of the earth. The stillness of

the

the evening was scarcely broken by the plaintive wailing of the sea-bird, as it ascends with circling motion, to discover the haunts of its absent mate, or the dull, and never-varying hummings of the falls which murmured at a distance. There was a feeling which spoke awfully to the heart in this dismal and eternal sound, which had rung in the ears of what was young and beautiful centuries ago, and rolled still its awful and resistless course, as regardless of the feeble race of human kind, as of the green insect of an hour, which unfolds its wings of gold to the summer sun, hums over the lucid surface of the flood, then dips into the blue wave, and is seen no more.

The reverie of Edda was broken by the sudden exclamation of Montbazon, "*there it is!*"

He now pointed out to her notice the

the distant spires of a castle, which seemed of immense extent, rising above the dark blue tints of a forest of pines, which enclosed it on every side.

"I congratulate you," said Montbazon, "on arriving at the conclusion "of your tedious journey; for, yon- "der is our destination, the castle of "Riddarholmen!"

In a few hours their guide stopped the horses before what had formerly been the grand entrance of the demesne. The pillars of the once splendid portico remained, but they bore the marks of evident decay, and some of them had fallen from their bases. One of the gates had been torn down, and the fragments of the other blocked up the way. The guide attempted in vain to remove it, and Montbazon was obliged to yield him his assistance 'ere they could proceed. While the

guide

guide prepared to drive the carriage underneath the arch of the portico, he looked round him with an evident expression of strong superstitious fear. When the carriage moved, one of the massive marble pillars fell with an immense crash; and the guide, whose terror seemed to increase with every circumstance, was obliged again to alight and remove the fragments which opposed the entrance of their vehicle. While he was effecting this, Montbazon walked to and fro in evident discomposure, and his countenance shewed that he regarded the circumstance which had just happened, as an omen of evil import. The difficulty being at length removed, they once more set forward. From the portico they entered a long avenue of trees, which led them towards the castle. The walks of this demesne, and the road leading through it were thickly

thickly covered with grass and weeds; the branches of the tall and ancient trees twisted into fantastic and knotted forms, stretching towards one another's unwieldy embrace, seemed to forbid the approach of aught that might disturb their solitary reign. There was no track of living thing to be seen—no sound of life—no vestige of animated existence.

Edda for the first time felt her heart chilled with unknown fear; and Montbazon examined the dark recesses of the forest they were passing with the deep scrutiny of well-founded apprehension; or he threw his eyes, which were filled with a gloomy forecast, upon the brighter planets of the night, which now began faintly to appear, as though he would read the stars. The guide stopped before the portal and Montbazon alighted and knocked upon the iron gate; the heavy sounds of

which

which were repeated for some moments by the dismal echoes of the forest. While Montbazon waited for the portal to be opened, Edda explored the exterior of the building, 'ere it was entirely wrapped in gloom, with minute anxiety.

The castle was the venerable remains of a stately pile. It was surrounded by a moat and wide fossé, which was full of stagnant water, and covered with green slime and weeds. Above the moat, a quadrangular wall, flanked at each corner with round towers, surrounded the body of the castle, which stood nearly in the centre of the surrounding fortification. The form of the castle was irregular. Its roof was partly flat, and in part covered by a dome, which rosé rather pointed in its centre, and was surmounted by a spire in the Asiatic style. Several square towers joined the main building, and

rose

rose above its roof, in long and graceful gothic spires. The compartments of these spires and the front of the roof, were filled with little images carved in wood, representing the apostles and saints in the attitude of adoration before the crucifix. The windows in many places were beaten in by the violence of rain and storms; and a few boards nailed together supplied their place. Several of the chimneys had been blown down and there was no smoke arising from their ruins, or aught that denoted it to be the habitation of human beings. Every thing bore the appearance of long neglect and undisturbed decay. The door was at length opened, and Montbazon crossed the drawbridge, and retired within the portal along with the person who had opened it.

Edda, who had obtained from Montbazon no information concerning this

place,

place, demanded of their guide if he could inform her who inhabited this dreary castle.

"Holy powers and sweet Christ "preserve us!" exclaimed the guide, "from aught that can harm! But "'tis said, my lady, this place is a "haunt of demons and bad spirits; "who, as a punishment for the hor- "rid crimes committed by Sigismund "the Cruel, one of the lords of the "castle in old time, are permitted to "revel here undisturbed; and they "say, that at such an hour as this, "the wicked one has power from the "Almighty to injure the innocent "and benighted traveller, whom cu- "riosity or chance has brought near "these walls.—Lord preserve us, lady, "and holy St. Bridget! do you ob- "serve that strange shape gliding "from under yonder trees?"

Edda now attempted to reason the

the guide out of his fears; but his teeth yet chattered, and his limbs shook. Although the strange account he had given her amused her rather than satisfied her on those points she was anxious to be informed of, yet she felt a sensation of awe, an indescribable and undefined fear stealing over her, which caused her anxiously to wish for the return of Montbazon, whose protracted stay within the castle alarmed her. From the guide she at last obtained the information, given with extreme reluctance and fear, that the only inhabitant of the castle, to his knowledge, was the old Warder, Olaus Renhorn, who it was firmly believed in the neighbourhood, was a magician and lived here in defiance of the evil spirits, whom he kept in subordination by the power of his enchantments; and the whole fief and castle belonged to the family.

of the Counts of Mörner, who had for many years ceased to reside in it.

The thread of his narration was abruptly terminated by the appearance of Montbazon, accompanied by the old Warder; a reverend figure, whose silver beard swept his breast, and whose long staff with difficulty supported a frame trembling with age. Edda was no longer surprised, that the ignorant peasants ascribed to Olaus a knowledge of the powers of magic. There was a wild expression in his venerable countenance, which denoted an acquaintance with strange sights and forms unholy. His dress appeared singular to Edda;—he wore on the crown of his head a small black cap, which was seamed with gold and trimmed with the skin of a black martin; his pelisse was made of wolf skin, and round his waist he wore a girdle and pouch, which was ornamented

with

with knotted braids and tassels of silk of various gay colours.

Edda bowed on his approach, and paid him the involuntary respect which his venerable years excited; while the guide, affected violently with his fears of the magician, knelt upon the ground, and made the sign of the cross incessantly. Olaus doffed his cap to Edda, with the air of one who has seen better days; he then turned to Montbazon to attend some orders he was giving him. The presence of Montbazon seemed to inspire the warder with additional emotion, and while he appeared to gaze upon him with looks of admiration, there was yet an expression of awe and fear mingled with this feeling, which resembled the homage paid to a superior being, rather than the devotedness arising between the two greatest extremes of human distinction.

Montbazon now dismissed the guide; and while he led Edda towards the portal, the merry chimes sounded at a distance, and a chorus of voices chaunting the vesper service, was heard stealing on the silence of night. The guide, in order to keep up his courage and banish the evil spirits, began to join lustily in the Ave Maria, while he spurred on his horses, and put them to their speed.

Montbazon looked towards the place from whence the sounds proceeded, with marked displeasure. Olaus, watching the motion of Montbazon's lips, anticipated the rising question. "'Tis from the Francis-"cans, who have lately occupied "the fane of St. Bridget." "And "by whose orders?" exclaimed Montbazon angrily. "They took posses-"sion," replied Olaus, "in the name "of the King!"

Montbazon

Montbazon proceeded gloomily without further question towards the grand entrance; and Edda sighed involuntarily, when she entered with faltering steps the castle of Riddarholmen.

CHAP. IV.

Vengeance is still alive; from her dark covert,
With all her snakes erect upon her crest,
She stalks in view.

YOUNG.

EACH day passed at the cottage on the lake, increased the tranquillity of Adolphus, and added fresh vigour to his health. The environs of the lake were uncommonly beautiful; and Adolphus now felt himself sufficiently strong to wander along its shores, or climb the cliffs which surrounded it. At times, recollections would arise, which rendered him incapable of tasting these innocent enjoyments; but he endeavoured to acquire the resources of that mental courage which

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tends to the government of mind, and the wielding of its energies with potency and effect. The fineness of the weather still induced them to take their evening repast in the open air.

A few evenings after Adolphus had finished his narration, they were seated before the door of the cottage, when they beheld two strangers approaching from the wood, which skirted the little cultivated ground which surrounded the cottage. Their travelling cloaks partly concealed their figures; but when they approached the table they all rose from their seats, for they perceived that the stranger who addressed them was of noble rank. He was a nobleman, about fifty years of age. His figure was tall and gaunt—his face had a sallow cadaverous hue, which the hectic of a moment scarcely

tinged with a bloom. The cares of many years had left on it their visible traces. The uncertain movement of his dark eyes was accompanied by a quick motion of his head, as if continually searching for some object, and yet fearing to rest his vision on it. His profile was of the finest line of aquiline beauty, and his entire appearance shewed the traces of an exquisite form, which had withered, and became decayed 'ere it reached its prime. The stranger (on whom the other seemed dependent, for he stood at a distance muffled in his cloak) addressed Axel, and informed him in few words, that his carriage had broke down in the neighbouring forest; he had left his servants to guard it and procure some one to repair it, while he had wandered with his friend in quest of some cottage, where he might obtain shelter for the night.

Axel,

Axel, with his usual hospitality, offered all the accommodation his rude cottage afforded; and requested the strangers to sit down, and partake of the remains of their supper. Carl was absent on this occasion, as he had been dispatched on an errand to the neighbouring town, and was not expected home until the following morning; Ulrica, therefore, entered the cottage, and made ready his room for the reception of one of the strangers. The strangers approached the table, and seated themselves; but how great was the astonishment of Adolphus, when the stranger who had kept aloof now placed himself opposite to him, and uncovering his visage, shewed the countenance of Rezzonico! Adolphus felt himself overcome by the consternation of the moment; but he recovered himself in a few minutes, and

imitated the forgetfulness of the Monk, who did not let it appear that he had ever beheld Adolphus before. Axel had risen from the table out of respect to his guests, and attended on them, some few paces behind. Adolphus now followed his example, and as he wore on that evening one of the coarse winter garments of the peasants, he wished to be confounded with them. The stranger ate and drank sparingly; and now and then threw a glance suddenly around him, as if he expected the approach, and wished to parry the blow of a treacherous enemy. Rezzonico, who had supped, now drew near the noble stranger; and for a time they held their heads close together, as if in deep consultation.

The table was at length removed; and for a few minutes, the stranger who was apparently much agitated,

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and Rezzonico who appeared endeavouring to tranquillize him, walked to and fro on the sandy beach, which stretched down towards the lake in front of the cottage. The descending sun had now stretched out the dark brown shadows of the surrounding cliffs, and the lake glowed with rich yellow and crimson hues; but the chilling breeze of evening began to ruffle its surface, and to sigh among the top branches of the tall pines which surrounded the cottage. The dark figures of the Monk and the noble stranger, stalking along the foreground, formed a gloomy outline against the vivid glories of the western sky. Their hasty strides, the tossing of their arms, and their robes streaming in the breeze, denoted the conflict of no ordinary feelings; while their lordly port, and the obscurity which seemed to dwell around them, im-

pressed the mind with the terrors of some wild vision, where shapes of fear, rising for some bloody aud fearful end, pass horrible and dark before it!

Axel now came forth, and invited them to retire within the cottage; when Rezzonico threw off his pelisse, and displayed the garments of a monk. Axel did not suffer the dislike he felt for the Catholic religion to inspire him with a thought incompatible with the exercise of hospitality. Although some of the peasantry were not exactly of his way of thinking, but still felt a lurking veneration for the religion of their ancestors, yet Axel, although a firm believer in the doctrines of the reformed religion introduced by the great Gustavus Vasa, and an enemy from principle to those who would again change the religion of the state, felt so perfect a charity towards all mankind,

mankind, that he rather increased than abated his attentions to Rezzonico, in order to avoid the imputation of intolerance. Adolphus drew back into a distant corner of the room, from whence he contemplated the group which sat before the open hearth. Ulrica had set some pine logs a blazing, and the red gleams of the fire illuminated the countenances of the stranger and Rezzonico, while the faces of the rest were gradually lost in shade.

After a considerable pause, the stranger turned round, as if from a sudden impulse of thought, and demanded of Axel, to whom he was indebted for so much kindness and hospitality? Axel, in reply to the stranger's compliment, mentioned his name, which had no sooner escaped his lips, than the stranger gave a frightful exclamation of surprise, and it was visible that his whole frame shook with

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an extraordinary convulsive emotion. Rezzonico had the address to change the conversation instantly; but Adolphus, although he had watched the singular expression of the stranger, could not perceive what effect it had on Axel, whose countenance was totally obscured in shade. The stranger soon recovered himself, and faintly smiled; but his smile had a terrible expression, and Adolphus shrunk involuntarily when he beheld it.

It now grew late, and the stranger expressing his wish to retire, lights were prepared by Ulrica. 'Ere he retired, however, he turned round to Axel, and endeavoured to repeat his thanks for the attention he had shewn to him; but the word *thanks* stuck in his throat, and the whole sentence was uttered in a manner scarcely intelligible.

Christina, Ulrica and Axel slept in beds which were placed against the

wall

wall adjoining the stove in the kitchen, according to the fashion of their country. Two small rooms, separated by a little passage from this apartment, and generally occupied by Adolphus and Carl, were appropriated to the accommodation of the travellers; and Adolphus mounted a ladder, which was placed in the passage of communication, which led to a small loft in the roof which partly covered the kitchen, and being quite open on one side commanded a view of it. In this loft, a small and decayed bedstead had been fitted up for Adolphus, who was desirous to avoid any communication with the travellers. Adolphus had no opportunity of informing Axel of his recognition of Rezzonico, and, on reflection, he considered that it would be in the highest degree base and inhuman, to allow a vague suspicion of his criminality to impel him to

open

open hostility against him; and he was not sorry that he had not said any thing to induce Axel to close the doors of hospitality against him, and to expose a fellow creature to all the severities of the night. He mused for some time on the extraordinary stranger whom Rezzonico accompanied. He was unknown to Axel; at least, he had not answered very satisfactorily to the questions which Adolphus had put concerning him, and appeared rather desirous of concealing any information he might have gained upon the subject.

Adolphus did not feel inclined to sleep; he paced, with folded arms, the circuit of his little apartment, and gave full scope to reflections on his melancholy situation. More than once he imagined he heard the noise of voices in angry dispute, and he started when the crazy timbers of the cottage

groaned

groaned beneath his pressure. Alarmed once more by a return of the same sounds, and ashamed of the unmanly thoughts which thronged his fancy and peopled his imagination with strange shapes, he threw a glance upon the apartment below him. By the faint gleam which the red and expiring embers emitted, Adolphus could discern no one in the room, except the inhabitants of the cottage, who occupied the stove beds, and who were now buried in sleep; yet he imagined that he beheld, at times, a dark shade crossing the red light, and stirring the dying embers. He chid himself for indulging this vain fancy; and again certain that he heard approaching voices, he opened a little casement in the roof, which looked towards the lake. The night was very dark—the ripples of the lake might be heard to break at measured intervals along the shore;

shore, but its surface was dark and still. Adolphus at length imagined that he perceived glowworm lights dancing upon the black and lucid mirror—the lights disappeared at intervals, and then appeared approaching the cottage. After a considerable time spent in watching the progress of this light, Adolphus discovered that it proceeded from a boat which was rowing by torch-light. He could now plainly discover the figures in the boat, and he heard the dashing of their oars. Instead of approaching the landing place, which was in the front of the cottage, the boat glided into a little bay at some distance, which was concealed by a little wooded promontory that jutted into the lake. Adolphus watched for some time, in vain, for its reappearance, and at length growing weary, he closed the casement, and retired to his bed. He had scarcely

fallen

fallen asleep, when he was awakened by a noise, resembling the cracking and crushing of dry timber. He listened attentively, and heard again the whispers of distant voices and the sound of an approaching step; but at length it sounded dully to his ear, for the torpor of sleep was yet upon him—he once more dismissed his fears, and settled himself to sleep.

The narrow door leading into the loft was cautiously opened and shut again; but Adolphus heard it not, so heavy was his slumber. A face now appeared at the top of the ladder, so pale and wan, that midnight murder seemed to be written on the guilty brow. It was the noble stranger, Axel's guest! He ascended the ladder cautiously and silently. He stopped at the door, and appeared to make an effort to retain his breath, lest his breathings should alarm those who slept.

slept. His eyes wandered wildly round the chamber. With a step slow and unsteady, and a motion checked by fear, he approached the bed where Adolphus lay. He bowed his ear to listen, and started; but the hard breathings of Adolphus reassured him, and convinced him that he slept. The red fire light now gleamed on his wavering figure, and he appeared to mutter some reflection to himself. With great emotion he drew forth from his bosom a dagger—while his tremulous eye rested on its point, the motion of the glittering steel betrayed the unsteadiness of his hand. The stranger now bent himself over the bed; but he could not bear to view the countenance of Adolphus so placid in sleep. The agitation of his frame shewed that he had worked up his soul to its guilty purpose. He averted his head, and prepared to strike at random.

The

The voice of Christina, agitated by some fearful dream, murmured in sleep, "*The Lord Jesus Christ! have* "*mercy!*"

The stranger started back with precipitation, and concealed the dagger in his bosom for a moment. "'Tis "but a dream — the fear prompted "cry of those who suffer in their "sleep," muttered the stranger; "this "shall not scare me from my pur- "pose. Now then, to send these "sleepers to their graves!"

The stranger once more drew forth the dagger, and approached the bed; but when he was about to strike, a violent noise in the adjoining chamber, and the sound of feet ascending the ladder, alarmed him. At the same moment, the gable end of the roof fell in with a terrible crash, and discovered the apartments which had been appropriated to Rezzonico and

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the stranger filled with flames of fire. Flakes of burning matter now fell thick around him, and volumes of smoke rolled towards him, filling the apartment in such a manner as to render it almost impossible for the stranger to distinguish his way. After attempting to find the entrance for a considerable time, he at length totally disappeared in the smoke. The cry of "*fire*," made Adolphus start from his bed, and he rushed towards the ladder; but this had been removed, and Adolphus had no means of escaping, but by descending into the ground floor of the cottage. Here the alarmed cottagers were endeavouring to grope their way through the smoke and burning fragments, and they attempted to save themselves by the doors and windows. The surprise and consternation of Axel was great when he discovered that they were fastened on the outside;

side; and as the flames were now spreading in every direction, the efforts made by Adolphus and Axel to break open the door were prodigious, and were actuated by the last resources of a hopeless despair. They at length succeeded, and their lives were saved by a miracle. Axel, assisted by Adolphus, lost not a moment in bringing water from the lake, and they fortunately succeeded in saving a great part of the cottage. The stranger and Rezzonico had disappeared; and it was not until after making an accurate examination of their apartments, that the alarm of Axel, and his dread that they had perished in the flames, was dissipated.

Adolphus did not hesitate to express to Axel his suspicions of Rezzonico being the incendiary; and the circumstance of all the outlets of the

cottage.

cottage being secured, and the escape of their guests, added to his well known enmity to Adolphus, seemed to give a considerable degree of probability to this opinion. Yet it appeared the contrivance of diabolical malignity, to involve the hospitable family, who sheltered them, along with Adolphus, in one common ruin: and by sending their unfortunate victim, together with those witnesses who might give evidence of the transaction, to the same grave, they appeared to wish to extinguish all record of their crime, and every possibility of their being brought to punishment hereafter.

Carl appeared at the dawning of day, and his efforts were added to those of his father and Adolphus, in cutting down timber and rebuilding that part of the cottage which suffered; and in a very few days, the rude

materials of which it was composed were put together, and the cottage was restored to its original state.

Among the peculiarities which Adolphus had observed in the inhabitants of the cottage, the remarkable exclamation which his mention of the name of Mörner had drawn from them, had not escaped his notice. Although absorbed in the agony of his own feelings at the time, yet his attention was excited and his penetration was baffled, in endeavouring to account for the extraordinary sensation which a name so high had created among his humble auditors. After the relation of his story, he observed a visible change in their manner towards him. Their attention, when he stood in need of it, was the same; but he observed, they no longer delighted to seek his presence, and a sense of the mere duties of hospitality only, seemed to influence

them; that sympathy of feeling which springs from the heart had flown, and with it he had lost the great charm which attached him to the cottage. With all the ardour of youth, he would sometimes draw on the treasures of his imagination, and would picture to them the bright futurity which his day-dreams presented to him, or expatiate with delight on the richness of those pleasing prospects which hope unfolded to his view. But these sallies drew from them only forced smiles, and their good wishes for his future fate were offered so fervently and so frequently, that he began himself to doubt of the future, and he caught from them the infection of fear.

Adolphus had observed during his stay at the cottage, that on certain days of the week, Christina was absent from sun-rise, and did not return until the following morning. He had ven-

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tured to ask the objects of these regular visits, and had received an answer so mysterious and unsatisfactory, that he avoided mentioning the subject again. This melancholy girl had often been to Adolphus a subject of astonishment. The beauty and symmetry of her figure at first interested him; but her mind exhibited such striking transitions of feeling, sensibility, and incoherence, that he felt himself at times shuddering with the apprehension of her insanity, or captivated with the pathos of her expression. She had absented herself latterly almost entirely from the cottage; and when she partook of their frugal meals, she looked like one absorbed in thought, and unconscious of existence. Adolphus perceived that these reveries were deeper and of longer duration, whenever she returned from her usual excursions. He concluded that there

was but one cause to produce such extraordinary conduct in a female—an unfortunate passion. "But where is "the man," exclaimed he, with surprise, "who would not feel proud to "possess so tender and affectionate "a heart?" What strengthened Adolphus in his conjecture, was her retired and secluded habits. When the interior of the cottage was arranged for the day, she would dive into the neighbouring forests, and the fleetness of her footsteps would defy the activity of Adolphus to follow her. While he strayed along the shores of the lake, her light form might be discerned moving on the pinnacle of the high and pine-dark cliffs, which hung over it like the skirt of a soft and silver cloud floating on its sharp and rugged summit; and the melancholy tones of her voice, as she sang some romantic ditty, would roll along the hills, and

were

were repeated in many a plaintive echo from the bosom of the lake. It was evident that she did not love Adolphus; for the common place gallantry of the age she resisted, and repelled those attentions which gratitude and pity would often induce him to display towards her, yet at the same time she would demonstrate feelings of the strongest sympathy and concern for his future welfare.

In Sweden, the seasons succeed one another with the greatest rapidity: the summer is short, but intensely hot; autumn lasts a few weeks, and then winter extends his icy sceptre, and throws his snowy mantle over the smiling face of nature. His reign is long, but not tedious; for then the hardy sons of the North exult in the pleasures it brings them. The facility it affords them of quick travelling in their sledges, is one of the greatest of

its blessings. Absent friends meet, visits are paid or returned, and the heaviest commodities are transported from the inland parts to the sea, ready for exportation, perhaps through a space of hundreds of miles, without feeling distance an obstacle. So quick, however, is the transition, that in a few days the snow disappears, and the icicles of winter are succeeded by the roses of spring! In the short interval between these seasons, bordering on winter, travelling is often rendered extremely perilous, and very often impracticable, owing to the melting of the snows, or the rain, which renders a carriage or a sledge equally useless.

Adolphus was apprised of these circumstances, and he intended to proceed to Stockholm, in quest of Count Mörner, before these obstacles would occur to impede his progress. A circumstance

cumstance happened, however, which, for a time, prevented his putting his intention into execution. A remarkable fine morning induced him to accept an invitation, which Axel had given him, to beat the neighbouring woods for game. They pursued their amusement for several hours in the dark fir woods which covered the mountains that surrounded the lake. An abundance of pheasants and the black cock of the wood rewarded their labour; and Adolphus pursued the squirrels, as they leaped from branch to branch, and from tree to tree, admiring the velocity with which these wary animals flew with amazing springs from the gun which was presented for their destruction. Fatigued with their excursion, they seated themselves on a rock to refresh themselves: when Adolphus intreated Axel, in very pressing terms, to give him all the infor-

mation he possessed respecting the family of Count Mörner. Axel threw a look of hesitation on Adolphus, while his features discovered the emotions of a soul harrowed up by some strong and disturbing recollections.

Axel instantly rose from the rock, and with a marked emphasis of sorrow, exclaimed, "I fear, young man, "that one day you will be too well "informed of the cause which makes "me shudder at the name of Mörner! "Be it, however, not on my head, "the sufferings which that name may "bring down on you. If your curiosity, however, is so strong and "so much excited, it may be gratified—but not by me. Follow me."

Axel, with an activity incredible at his age, now scaled one of the tallest cliffs above them; Adolphus followed his footsteps with wonder and amazement. In some places, where the im-

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pending rocks had loosened from their bed, and threatened, on the slightest motion of the air, or the yielding of a pebble from beneath, to dash them into atoms in the dark glens which yawned beneath their feet, the way was perilous and difficult. By grasping the long branches of the underwood and the long suckers which grew in the interstices of the rocks, they gained a passage, where their footing was insecure. On looking on the lake and woods below, the head grew dizzy, and the sight ached with pain. Adolphus now perceived that Axel, having gained nearly the highest elevation, stood patiently waiting his approach on the edge of the cliff. After a few struggles, he joined him, and the beauty of the prospect fully recompensed him for the dangers of the way which led to it. The lake which, viewed from the cottage, seemed of

small extent, and hemmed in by the neighbouring hills, now shewed the diversities of its form, and the rich and variegated outline of its bold and bending shores—numbers of islands, tufted with wood, were sprinkled on its surface, and many of the cliffs which surrounded it, jutted boldly into the centre of the lake. It was on one of these they stood.

"Behold!" said Axel, pointing with his staff to the opposite shore, "can "you discern that bright spot amid "the dark foliage which the sun now "reddens with his beams?" Adolphus rivetted his eyes on the spot. "It is the castle of that Count "Mörner whom you seek."

Although the distance was considerable between the opposite shores, yet Adolphus perceived that the building he viewed was of considerable extent, and stood a little elevated above the lake.

The blue smoke rising from some peasants' fires in the distance, gradually obscured it from the view. The mists of the lake began to ascend, and the declining sun warned them to depart.

Axel led Adolphus homewards, by a longer but safer path than that by which they had ascended. They proceeded to the cottage in silence. Axel's mind was filled with many melancholy subjects, and Adolphus was meditating on the extraordinary replies of Axel, and planning an excursion on the following morning to the castle of Count Mörner. On his arrival at the cottage, Adolphus communicated his intention to the family when they assembled at supper. It was determined that Carl should attend the Count. To cross the lake was the shortest way, and much preferable to going round by the woods at that season of the year. It fortunately happened that

some young peasants of the neighhood were going to attend a market at the town of Nerlunda, which lay near the castle; they had called at Axel's cottage on their way, and it was agreed that the Count and Carl should accompany them in their boat.

Early the following morning they embarked, and Carl took care to bring an ample store of cold provisions and brandy. As the boat receded from the shore, the cottage vanished from the view, and was at length completely concealed by a skreen of pines, which threw their dark impenetrable shade around it. The only memorial which marked the spot, was a wreath of thin blue smoke, which curled through the surrounding trees. There had been a slight frost; but the sun shone bright, and was chasing away the hazy morning vapour; the trees waved their gaudy red and yellow foilage in the breeze,

breeze, and the birds sung merrily. Adolphus, who felt all the energy of renewed existence, gazed with pleasure on the chearful scene around him. His heart expanded with gratitude towards the author of his being, who had extended his protecting arm over him, and guided him in safety through the perils he had passed. The heart which throbbed with this feeling worshipped its Creator in silence. It was the secret and spontaneous homage of the soul, and not the mockery of deceitful lips, profaning the temple with hypocritical offerings. Yet, as he gazed on the receding shore, a sensation of sorrow smote him. The happiest days since his father's death he had spent in that cottage, which he left with regret, and might never behold again. The simple, yet strikingly honourable character of its inhabitants, had made a deep impression on his heart.

heart. He felt convinced that no lapse of time, nd change of circumstance, could erase this impression from his heart. He was now aware, that there was some mysterious cause of enmity, between the family of Count Mörner and the cottagers. But he felt that he could not be implicated in this dislike, and he formed a resolution not to be prejudiced against either, by any explanation which might be given on this subject.

As the boat glided past a little rocky promontory, the sound of music reached his ear. The tune was familiar to him; he now recollected it was one of Christina's songs; and in a few minutes, her light form was seen appearing and vanishing among the rocks.

There was scarcely a ripple on the lake. Having overcome the greater part of their voyage, their way now lay through a cluster of islands, which

seemed

seemed to vie with one another in romantic beauty. A surface of green turf, shaded by groves of fir and pine, through whose long dark vistas a beam of light would sometimes break, and the sunny rays might be seen dancing on the distant waters. Round their sides, the birch and the alder grew in graceful groups down to the water's edge; while rocks of the most picturesque forms were scattered about among the aquatic plants, whose surfaces were umbered by the dark and mellow tints of the different species of heath, or relieved and silvered by masses of grey and amber coloured moss.

The boat now approached the shore; and with considerable difficulty they steered it through a narrow pass, which seemed to be formed by some great convulsion of nature. Fragments of dark ferruginous coloured rock, like

like towers and spires, rent from the adjoining cliffs, rendered the passage through them extremely dangerous; while the lake rushing with rapidity through them, seeking to discharge itself in the river of Nerlunda, which took its rise from this part of it, tossed the boat in a whirlpool of foam, and threatened to crush its feeble sides against the rocks. After passing these rocks in safety, they kept close to land, where the current rolled with less violence; and soon after, the shore declining gently, they landed, as the boat was too heavily laden, to permit them to pass the falls of the river.

The spot where they landed was at a short distance from the town and river of Nerlunda, where Adolphus intended passing the night. Adolphus and Carl, fatigued with ascending the steep road which wound among the cliffs, as soon as they arrived at the summit

summit sat down, and refreshed themselves with the cold provisions which Carl had provided. While they rested, they heard the chearful song of the peasants, and the dashing of their oars, as they proceeded along the shore to the river; the falls of which they were accustomed to pass at all hours, without any apprehension of danger.

As soon as Adolphus and Carl had ended their repast, they proceeded to the river which separated them from Nerlunda. It was dark when they arrived at a few cottages, which were situated on its banks. The river appeared divided into many channels, owing to the numerous fissures, which the lake had worn through the rocky shore. Farther down it is impossible to construct a bridge, owing to the dangerous cataracts formed by the river, as it rolls through the frowning cliffs, which seem to contend with it

in its passage; and which, according to the popular superstition of the country, were riven and thrown into appalling forms by the power of a mighty sorcerer; and are still the favourite haunt of his demons, who exult with savage delight in marring the beautiful harmony of nature.* The eagerness of Adolphus would not permit him to wait for the morning's dawn; guided by a rushing noise, which sounded like distant thunder, they proceeded towards the slender bridges, which spanned the stream above the cataracts. They had to scramble over many obstacles, fragments of rock, and immense piles of timber, which were ready to be precipitated down the cataracts. They crossed several floorings, which hung over the river; these were in many parts decayed, and they found themselves in danger every moment

* Vide note at the end of the volume.

moment of slipping through the interstices of the planks, beneath which they heard the water, which poured itself down the falls, murmuring with a gloomy sound. Adolphus succeeded in getting over the most dangerous pass in safety; at the same moment, the moon which before was obscured, now shed her magic light upon the scene, which he gazed on with heartfelt awe and admiration. The rock on which he stood was every moment drenched with spray. The falls were like the billows of an immense sea, agitated by a storm; dashing its waters in unwieldy masses, to a depth, which it required no effort of the imagination to suppose infinite. The deep and muttering thunder of their course, as they bounded on the rocks and fell into the abyss, was gloomily sublime. The appearance of all nature, at this moment, accorded

with

with the wild character of its scenery. The cold light of the moon shone on the water, and feebly gleamed on the distant rocks, dark firs, and pines, whose forms, indistinct and undefined, hung over the milk white flood which rushed between them. The ceaseless shower of spray, which the wind wafted towards the rock on which they stood, forced them to pursue their passage to the opposite shore. On looking up the river, the silence of its streams, the lake, and the smooth convexity of its form, before it burst over its rocky boundary, in which the red gleams of the peasants' fires checquered with the moon-light, were reflected as in a convex mirror; formed a striking contrast to the terrific and almost supernatural sublimity of that awful wreck of nature, which they had just witnessed.

After crossing the bridges, they pursued

pursued their way along a road which was hewn out of the solid rock. They met a boy who was carrying some billets of wood for firing, to the little hamlet of Nerlunda. "How far is it, "my little friend, to the castle of "Count Mörner?" demanded Adolphus.

"It is no great way to Riddárholm "men," replied the boy, "but the "road is none of the best, and at this "hour the spirits are all abroad." The boy now looked behind him with fear, and quickened his pace, while Adolphus encouraged him to continue. "Besides, the only mortal inhabitant "of the castle, old Olaus Renhorn, "goes to bed they say at sunset."

"And who is Olaus Renhorn?" demanded Adolphus.

"Why, in good sooth now, you "must have heard of Olaus; he is "the

" the warder of the castle, and a great
" magician."

" A magician," replied Adolphus,
" I wish then he had exerted some of
" his magic art upon the approach to
" his castle; for this is a vile and
" rugged way."

" Hush!" said the boy, " take not
" his name in vain; for if you mock
" him, some of his demons who are
" abroad will hear you, and pinch us
" rarely. But now that the road has
" wound to the left, if you look be-
" hind you, you may see the castle."

Adolphus turned, and beheld the slender spires of the castle, which rose above the wood in which the body of the building seemed buried. Beyond it the falls might be discerned, and the foam which rose in a mist above it, the distant lake, and the majestic shapes of the hills which surrounded it, all strongly lighted up; while the

the castle, its gloomy forest, and the bleak and rocky fore-ground on which they stood, all was black and darkly terrific. Adolphus admired that strong light, which became more dazzling when crossed by the deep and sombre shadow; although there was something appaling in the savage wildness of the scene.

Adolphus and Carl followed the boy to the hamlet, and they found no difficulty in procuring accommodation among the simple and honest inhabitants. On the following morning Adolphus took leave of Carl, and it was not without strong emotions of grief on both sides, that they separated. Adolphus took a guide from Nerlunda, and as the morning was keen and frosty, he preferred walking to the castle, to any other mode of conveyance. The road skirted the cliffs which hung over the falls, and exhibited

hibited all the grandeur and sublimity of alpine scenery. But the frost rendered their journey slow and difficult. The guide quitted Adolphus at the portico of the avenue which led to the castle, and no intreaties could persuade him to proceed further. Adolphus mused upon the extraordinary superstitious feeling which seemed to prevail among the peasantry, respecting Riddarholmen and its lord.

After several times losing his way in the thickly tangled passages of the wood, he at length reached the extremity of the avenue. He felt a melancholy pervade his heart, when he contemplated the castle. Appaled by the appearance of so venerable a building lapsing into ruin, he was struck with two very remarkable objects, which seemed to claim pre-eminence in this universal scene of desolation. Apart from the surrounding wood,

and

and opposite to one of the fronts of the castle, stood the lofty trunks of two ancient pine trees. There was no bud, no blossom of that eternal green which nature clothes them with: their silver bark was disfigured by a foul and murky stain; they were sapless, withered and decayed; yet they stood erect, and overtopped the neighbouring wood: there was not left a branch or shoot to grace their spiry stem! Was it the lightening of heaven which had blasted them? were they the victims of heaven's wrath, and had they saved the house of Mörner from its avenging judgments? or did the same bolt, in its awful course, strike against the foundations of both? Such were the thoughts of Adolphus when he lifted the knocker of the drawbridge gate. The courts of the castle repeated the dismal sound.

In a few moments the heavy iron

bolts were withdrawn, and Olaus stood before Adolphus and demanded his pleasure. The appearance of this extraordinary old warder suspended for a few moments Adolphus's further question. "Are you Olaus Renhorn?" At the sound of that voice the old man started, and looked like one over whom there steals some sad yet soothing recollection of his distant youth. He replied in the affirmative, and bowed lowly before Adolphus.

"Dwells Count Mörner in these "ruins?" demanded Adolphus, looking round him sarcastically.

"Ah! no; it is many a winter's "storm has shaken these towers, since "the Count slept beneath the roof of "Riddarholmen."

"I seek him, for he was my father's "friend; who, at his dying hour, left "me to Count Mörner's protection. I "come from France."

"From

"From France? Christ protect us!" exclaimed Olaus.

The old warder now led Adolphus across the courts to the castle: they were overgrown with moss and weeds, and filled in parts by heaps of massy fragments, which had fallen from the walls of the castle.

"Why, what a goodly pile is here "falling to decay!" exclaimed Adolphus.

Olaus sighed heavily, but made no reply. He led Adolphus away from the grand entrance, and opened the door of one of the turrets, which lay at the back of the great building. Adolphus willingly accepted of the invitation of the old warder, and followed him up a small winding decayed staircase, which led to the few rooms in the turret which Olaus inhabited. A few chairs and a table of rude and ancient workmanship, an old cross-

bow, a warder's horn and helmet, a small bed which was covered with the skin of a white bear, were the only furniture they boasted.

"Come to the hearth," said the old warder, as he threw some fresh billets on the embers; "this day, as I reckon "it, is the first of our winter, and "these clouds, which are rolling yon- "der along the hills, portend a snow "storm."

Adolphus felt himself chilled with the cold. After he had warmed himself at the fire, he approached the casement, and saw that Olaus had prognosticated justly. The snow in thick showers flew far over the pine-clad landscape, and silvered the woods and mountains: the wind sighed, as it swept through the distant passages of the castle, and the hundred spires of old Riddarholmen's towers shook and trembled in the storm. Olaus closed

to

to the casement, trimmed their fire, and placed some provisions on the table.

The morning's walk had excited the appetite of Adolphus, and old Olaus, who could scarcely keep his eyes from him, was delighted to see him eat so heartily. Olaus brought forth some brandy, and filled a bumper, which he drank to the health of Adolphus. After Adolphus had filled, pledged his host, and drank off the brimming horn, he drew his chair over towards him, and requested him to explain the causes which led the family of Count Mörner to abandon so fine a building to the rage of the elements: he added, that "the trees in the front of the "castle seemed to him not to have "escaped the general destruction."

"Ah! those trees relate to a very "melancholy story," replied Olaus, "and at this hour of the night it

" makes one's blood freeze to talk
" of the unblessed dead! Besides we
" are near the dreadful anniversary;
" and at that time strange shapes are
" seen to walk their rounds in the
" night season: voices are heard to
" issue from the murky clouds, and
" dismal wailings echo through the
" long passages of the castle, portend-
" ing fresh ....

" Hark!" interrupted Adolphus,
" some one knocks! 'tis at the win-
" dow!"

" Shield us, cross of Christ!" exclaimed Olaus, approaching the casement. " Ah!" continued he, " 'tis
" only the flapping of an owlet's wing,
" which the lights have attracted from
" the mouldering spires of the castle.
" List! how dismally he hoots, as he
" beats against the storm! — I was
" about to add," continued Olaus,
" that those supernatural warnings
" portend

" portend fresh calamities to the house " of Mörner."

Olaus now drew his chair closer to the fire, and after throwing a look of anxiety and fear round the walls of his apartment, he commenced the following relation.

NOTE,

Page 282, line 8—"the favourite haunts of his demons, who will exult with savage delight in marring the beautiful harmony of nature."

A principal feature in the Swedish landscape, is the variety arising from its numerous extensive lakes and rapid rivers, and the romantic beauties of their abrupt and precipitous falls. The Cataract of Elfcarleby on the river Dahl, is eminently grand; but it yields in sublime and terrific effect to the Falls of Trollhätta on the Götaelf, which are the most celebrated in Scandinavia, and have perhaps no equal on the Continent of Europe. They have been compared with the Fall of the Rhine at Schaffhausen, and some travellers do not hesitate to ascribe the superiority to the former. Although the fall of Schaffhausen may possibly excel in grandeur any of the Falls of Trollhätta, viewed separately, yet I do not hesitate to affirm that there is no natural curiosity in the world capable of impressing the mind of the spectator with more sublime emotion, than that produced by witnessing the

the succession of grand Falls at Trollhätta. I am happy to illustrate this note by the following extracts from the Guide to the Falls, written by Colonel (now General) Skjöldebrand, who acted a conspicuous part in the perilous campaign of 1808, in which Finland was lost to Sweden; who has won later laurels in the memorable triumphs of 1814; and who has always adorned that country by his arts, which he defended with his arms.

" Le nom de *Trollhattä* signifie en Suédois
" Chapeau ou Bonnet de Démon, et c'est ainsi
" que l'explique Olaus Magnus, L 2. ch. 20;
" mais Verelius, commentateur de Sturleson, et
" de l'Hervarar Saga, nous donne dans ses notes
" sur ce dernier ouvrage une explication qui
" paroît plus plausible. *Hattä*, dit-il, signifie
" dans l'ancienne langue Gothique, danger, ou
" entreprise périlleuse; le sens du nom de *Troll-*
" *hätta* peut donc avoir été que le passage de
" ces cataractes seroit dangereux même aux dé-
" mons Verelius ajoute, que *Troll* ne signifioit
" pas seulement démon, mais aussi géant, demi-
" géant, homme d'une taille au-dessus de l'or-
" dinaire; et comme une troupe de brigands,
" (dont

" (dont nous parlerons dans la suite) s'étoit éta-
" blie dans une caverne sur les bords des cata-
" ractes, il suppose que ce mot peut avoir eu
" rapport à ces brigands et à l'accès dangereux
" de leur repaire. On pourroit ajouter encore
" une explication, c'est que l'approche de ces
" lieux étoit dangereuse, à cause de ces mêmes
" brigands ; et comme il est plus curieux qu'il
" n'est utile de savoir positivement quel est le
" vrai sens, nous nous contenterons d'avoir in-
" diqué les différens avis, et nous laisserons au
" lecteur le soin ou le plaisir de prononcer "

" *Chute de Troppö.* Ce fleuve partagé en deux
" par un rocher stérile et caverneux, s'élance
" avec furie et tombe dans un précipice affreux.
" En deça du rocher, les eaux étroitement res-
" serrées s'élèvent des deux côtés, et baissent au
" milieu, où elles semblent se disputer le pas-
" sage. Ne trouvant encore aucun obstacle, la
" surface en est presque unie et d'un verd trans-
" parent, mêlé de filets d'écume ; mais bientôt,
" touchant à des rochers inégaux, toute leur
" masse paraît un énorme amas de neige, où,
" dans un mouvement continuel, des formes ra-
" vissantes se succèdent et disparoissent en un
" clin d'œil. L'immense quantité de l'eau qui
" se précipite par un passage si étroit avec une
" rapidité inconcevable, la hauteur des rochers,

" qui

" qui forment le bord opposé du fleuve et qui
" menacent de s'écrouler par la force terrible
" qui secoue leurs fondemens, un bruit compa-
" rable à celui de cent tonnerres réunis ; voilà ce
" qui rend ce spectacle si frappant et si digne
" d'attention." &c. &c.

END OF VOL. I.

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P137